dissent

$3.50/Spring 1984

THE OTHER AMERICA

BARBARA EHRENREICH & FRANCES FOX PIVEN
The Feminization of Poverty

MICHAEL HARRINGTON
The Gradgrinds of Reaganism

ANDREI SINYAVSKY
Dissent as a Personal Experience

JAMES SLEEPER
Neoliberalism's Hesitation Dance

MARK OSIEL & ELIZA WILLIS
Is Chile Near Explosion?

DIANE RAVITCH/
DEBORAH MEIER
An Exchange on Education

VICTOR GOTBAUM
Our Unions Under Attack

JONATHAN FRANKEL
Bar Kochba— And All That

BENJAMIN BARBER
Political Talk/ "Strong Democracy"

0 73361 64790

And for Charles Dickens, see the back cover

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

BENJAMIN R. BARBER teaches political science at Rutgers University. He is the author, most recently, of the novel *Marriage Voices* and the forthcoming *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for the New Age.*

JACK BEATTY is a senior editor of the *Atlantic Monthly.*

JUAN E. CORRADI, who was educated in Argentina and the U.S., is teaching sociology at New York University. He is the author of *Ideology and Social Change in Latin America* and of a forthcoming book, tentatively entitled *The Making and Breaking of Argentina.*

JOHN C. CORT is a coeditor of *Religious Socialism,* published by the Religion and Socialism Commission of the Democratic Socialists of America.

BARBARA EHRENREICH, an active feminist, co-author (with Deirdre English) of *For Her Own Good* and author of *The Hearts of Men,* is a fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C.

JONATHAN FRANKEL teaches Russian and Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His most recent book is *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1882–1917.*

GEORGE M. FREDRICKSON is William Smith Mason professor of American history at Northwestern University. Among his books are *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* and *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History.*

GEORGE MCALMON is a writer who lives in El Paso.

NICOLAUS MILLS, who teaches literature at Sarah Lawrence College, is the author of *Busing U.S.A.* and *The New Journalism.* He is now writing on the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964.

MARK J. OSIEL, a sociologist and doctoral candidate at Harvard, is engaged in research in Latin America.

FRANCES FOX PIVEN teaches political science at the City University of New York. She has co-authored (with Richard A. Cloward) *Regulating the Poor, The Politics of Turmoil, Poor People's Movements,* and *The New Class War: Reagan's Attack on the Welfare State and Its Consequences.*

DIANE RAVITCH, an adjunct professor of history and education at Teachers' College, Columbia University, is the author of *The Great School Wars, The Revisionists Revised,* and *The Troubled Crusade: American Education.*

LESTER RODNEY was the sports editor of the *Daily Worker* from 1936 till '57 and, later, religious editor for a number of California newspapers.

JAN ROSENBERG, a sociologist teaching at Long Island University in New York City, is at work on a study of West Indian immigrant women.

PETER SCHNEIDER, a German novelist and political journalist, is author of *Lenz,* a novel about the '60s student generation and the screen play of *Knife in the Head.*

FRED SIEGEL, a historian, teaches at Cooper Union, New York City. His book *Troubled Journey: From Pearl Harbor to Ronald Reagan* will be published this spring.

ANDREI SINYAVSKY (ABRAM TERTZ), the eminent Russian dissident writer, now lives in Paris. Two of his books, *A Voice from the Chorus* and *The Trial Begins,* are available in English.

JIM SLEEPER, a New York City journalist, writes widely about electoral politics and immigration.

ELIZA WILLIS, a social scientist and doctoral candidate at the University of Texas, Austin, is conducting research in Latin America.

DISSENT (ISSN 0012-3846), issued April 1, 1984, is published quarterly, winter, spring, summer, and fall, by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: $14.00 for one year; $25.00 for two years; $9.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $3.00 for mailing costs per year; institutional rate $19.00 per year, $35.00 for two years, single copy $3.50. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, $3.50. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 155 West Fifteenth Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

© 1984 by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc. (FSISI). Permission to reprint any article must be obtained from the publishers. • Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. • Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. • Volume 31, Number 2 (whole No. 135).

• DISSENT does not engage in lobbying nor support candidates or legislation.

Front Cover Design by Robert Schwartz.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Welcome to the Readers of *democracy*!

This past winter the quarterly magazine *democracy* ceased publication. An arrangement was then made between *democracy* and *Dissent* so that uncompleted subscriptions to *democracy* would be taken over and filled by *Dissent*. A letter of explanation has gone out to *democracy*'s subscribers, and the editors of *Dissent* have sent a memorandum to the editors of and contributors to *democracy*, inviting them to send material for publication in our pages.

We are saddened by the termination of *democracy*, since we believe that the liberal-left community in America, beset as it is by many problems, needs all voices it can muster. But we also hope that the *democracy* community, both writers and readers, will find our magazine congenial, even though—as is only natural—there may be some differences of outlook and style.

So we wish to extend here a cordial welcome to the *democracy* readers. We hope you enjoy the copies of *Dissent* that will reach you. We hope you will let us know what you think of our magazine—and will think enough of it to resubscribe when the time comes.

But most of all, we hope you will feel linked to us in a common task of social change and renovation.

THE EDITORS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Strong Democracy

Participatory Politics for a New Age

BENJAMIN BARBER

An excess of democracy, it is often said, can undo liberal institutions. Benjamin Barber argues to the contrary that an excess of liberalism has undone our democratic institutions.

Strong democracy, Barber writes, defined as the participation of all the people in at least some aspects of self-government at least some of the time, offers liberal society a new way of thinking about and of practicing democracy. To be free, we must be self-governing; to have rights, we must be citizens. The argument for strong democracy, though critical of liberalism, is thus an argument on behalf of liberty.

Benjamin Barber's books include *Marriage Voices* (a novel), 1981, *The Artist and Political Vision* (edited with M. J. McGrath), 1981, *Liberating Feminism*, 1975, *The Death of Communal Liberty*, 1974, *Supermen and Common Men*, 1971, and *Totalitarianism in Perspective* (with C. J. Friedrich and M. Curtis), 1969.

320 pages **June** **$16.95**

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF *California*
PRESS · BERKELEY · LOS ANGELES · NEW YORK · LONDON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AT FIRST GLANCE

Murray Hausknecht

"Knee-jerk liberalism"—a term not heard much these days—was once used by conservatives to deride the supposed automatic nature of liberal responses to social and political issues. Conservatives conveniently forgot that one function of any set of beliefs is to create an initial attitude toward the world, and that they are no more immune to such ideological reflexes than liberals or radicals.

Consider, for example, the authoritarian reflex exemplified by the Reagan administration. At the beginning of Reagan's term the air controllers, one of the very few unions that had supported Reagan, went on strike. The Administration's response went far beyond the conventional rhetoric that government employees had no right to strike. It took the extreme line of firing the strikers and destroying the union. That a conservative administration would respond with hostility to a strike is only to be expected; antagonism to labor is one of its hallmarks. But antipathy to unions does not require the full use of the legal power to break strikes and destroy unions; at least, it is not normally expected of democratic governments. The maximum use of available power is properly expected of decayed totalitarian regimes—the Polish government's campaign to crush Solidarity surprised no one.

□

The authoritarian reflex is, in part, a reaction to an open challenge to the policies of those in authority and, in part, a response to the mere questioning of authority. To raise questions about policies endorsed by policy-makers or even to report facts that may raise questions in the minds of others is perceived as but one step away from disloyalty to the political system itself.

When Grenada was invaded, the military deliberately did not invite reporters to cover the operation, a decision agreed to by the civil authorities. Later George Shultz said that during World War II reporters were "on our side. These days . . . it seems as though the reporters are always against us. They're always seeking to support something that's going to screw things up."

This reaction to the press is of a piece with the Administration's attempt to censor anything a public official who has access to "classified information" may write once he leaves office, and this proposal, in turn, is related to the Administration's threatening those suspected of "leaking" information with lie-detector tests. William Safire, a journalist of impeccable conservative credentials, notes that Reagan has "adopted the view . . . that dissent borders on disloyalty." (Safire's own dissenting view is merely the sound of one ox being gored.)

Any form of censorship is an attempt to control definitions of reality, and the Administration's anticipatory censorship—defining now what may be barred in the future—is the logical extension of a practice common to all groups exercising power. That is, any ruling group attempts to mold beliefs. The authoritarian reflex, however, is distinguished by a relative lack of inhibition to use power for this purpose. It is one thing to steer reporters in a battle area so that they see what serves the interests of the military; it is quite another for a democratic government to exclude reporters altogether from a military operation. In both the PATCO strike and the attempts to control information, the authoritarian reflex is, metaphorically speaking, to reach for the gun, to use the most force available when a threat to authority appears to exist.

In Grenada, metaphor becomes reality. Faced by a country whose character seemed to challenge the American claim to hegemony in the region, the Administration responded with the use of force. That such a response is most likely to occur when the object is unable to defend itself is also characteristic of the authoritarian reflex.

But Grenada reveals something more. The authoritarian reflex is not simply relatively uninhibited use of power but a celebration of that reaction. The invasion became an occasion for national pride; Americans were supposed to feel a patriotic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

glow because a challenge to American influence was crushed by armed might. By encouraging a definition of patriotism as pride in the use of force, the authoritarian reflex feeds upon itself. The emotions it induces make it more probable that military power will be used the next time there is a perceived challenge to American influence.

□

At the core of the authoritarian reflex is an unstated assumption that authority is endangered when there is a lack of full commitment to the policies of those in power. But dissent and conflict are the very stuff of politics, and the practice of politics consists of finding ways of resolving those problems. When mobilizing the full coercive power of the state becomes routine political practice, repression may be well on its way to becoming the dominant mode of resolving conflicts and contending with dissenting voices.

Liberalism as an unthinking ideological response has its own failings. But some automatic reactions are fail-safe systems, and in democratic societies knee-jerk liberalism is to be preferred to the authoritarian reflex. After all, knee-jerk liberalism is likely to protect liberties. □

Democracy and Dictatorship in Latin America
A special publication devoted entirely to the voices and opinions of writers from Latin America
Published by the Foundation for the Independent Study of Social Ideas/$5
Octavio Paz
Jorge Edwards
Carlos Franqui
Enrique Krauze
José Miguel Oviedo
Rodolfo Pastor
Carlos Rangel
Gabriel Zaid
Juan E. Corradi
Dialogues with
Ernesto Sabáto

Order from F.S.I.S.I. 521 Fifth Avenue, N.Y. 10017
Price for bundle orders on request.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas presents:

ALTERNATIVES

PROPOSALS FOR AMERICA FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Edited By
Irving Howe

WITH ESSAYS BY:
IRVING HOWE
ROBERT LEKACHMAN
MICHAEL HARRINGTON
GORDON ADAMS
BOB KUTTNER
FRANCES FOX PIVEN &
BARBARA EHRENREICH

Reaganism: This Too Will Pass . . . Paying for Progress . . . Women and the Welfare State . . . Creating Real National Security . . . Jobs . . . A Case for Democratic Planning . . . *paper* $6.95

***Publication:* May 29, 1984**

PANTHEON BOOKS, 201 East 50th Street, New York 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

With the ominous year of 1984 just around the calendar, Irving Howe has gathered a wide range of distinguished contributors to examine the historical, political and intellectual problems that gave rise to Orwell's great book. With viewpoints spanning the gamut of serious opinion in the United States, they offer a fresh and provocative analysis of *1984* and the ideas it spawned, and the problems raised by the course of totalitarianism since it first appeared.

Part I—The Book and the Writer

Irving Howe 1984: Enigmas of Power
Mark Crispin Miller The Fate of *1984*
Elaine Hoffman Baruch "The Golden Country": Sex and Love in *1984*
Bernard Avishai Orwell and the English Language
Luther Carpenter *1984* on Staten Island

Part II—Ideas

Robert C. Tucker Does Big Brother Exist?
Michael Walzer On "Failed Totalitarianism"
Leszek Kolakowski Totalitarianism and the Virtue of the Lie
Milovan Djilas The Disintegration of Leninist Totalitarianism
Johanno Strasser *1984*: Decade of the Experts?
James B. Rule *1984*—The Ingredients of Totalitarianism
Robert Nisbet *1984* and the Conservative Imagination

Part III—History **Richard Lowenthal** Beyond Totalitarianism

IRVING HOWE
EDITOR

A Perennial Library paperback original from
Harper & Row **10 East 53d Street • New York, NY 10022**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dissent

SPRING 1984

131
AT FIRST GLANCE *by Murray Hausknecht*
136
OUR UNIONS UNDER ATTACK *by Victor Gotbaum*

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

137
COMMENTS by Robert Lekachman . . . Peter Steinfels . . . John C. Cort . . . Jack Beatty . . . Bogdan Denitch . . . Dennis Wrong

ARTICLES

152
DISSENT AS A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE *by Andrei Sinyavsky*
162 & 171
THE PERSISTENCE OF POVERTY: 1. THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY *by Barbara Ehrenreich and Frances Fox Piven*
2. THE NEW GRADGRINDS *by Michael Harrington*
182
NEOLIBERALISM'S HESITATION DANCE *by Jim Sleeper*
188
JUMPING THE BERLIN WALL *by Peter Schneider*
192
ISRAEL: BAR KOCHBA AND ALL THAT *by Jonathan Frankel*
203 & 207
LATIN AMERICA: 1. TWO CHEERS (AND A PRAYER) FOR ARGENTINE DEMOCRACY *by Juan E. Corradi*
2. IS CHILE HEADED FOR A SHOWDOWN? *by Mark J. Osiel and Eliza Willis*
215
POLITICAL TALK—AND "STRONG DEMOCRACY" *by Benjamin R. Barber*

COMMUNICATIONS

223
A DEBATE ON EDUCATION *by Diane Ravitch and Deborah Meier*

MOVIES

230
REAGANIZING HOLLYWOOD *by Nicolaus Mills*

NOTEBOOK

233
SO CALLOUS A NATION *by George McAlmon* . . . AGAIN: ORWELL AND THE NEOCONSERVATIVES *by Irving Howe*

BOOKS

237
REVIEWS by George M. Fredrickson, Jan Rosenberg and Fred Siegel, Mark Levinson, Lester Rodney

LETTERS

247

INDEX

249

EDITORS:
Irving Howe
Michael Walzer

MANAGING EDITOR:
Edith H. Tarcov

BUSINESS MANAGER:
Simone Plastrik

EDITORIAL BOARD:
Bernard Avishai
David Bensman
Marshall Berman
H. Brand
David Bromwich
Joseph Buttinger
Luther Carpenter
Jack Clark
Joseph Clark
Jean L. Cohen
Lewis Coser
Rose Laub Coser
Bogdan Denitch
George Eckstein
Cynthia F. Epstein
Emanuel Geltman
Michael Harrington
Murray Hausknecht
Robert Heilbroner
Erazim Kohák
William Kornblum
Jeremy Larner
Robert Lekachman
Mark Levinson
Norman Mailer
Deborah Meier
Martin Peretz
Jack Rader
Ronald Radosh
Bernard Rosenberg
James Rule
Meyer Schapiro
Brendan Sexton
Patricia Cayo Sexton
Ronnie Steinberg
Peter Steinfels
Dennis Wrong

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Victor Gotbaum

Our Unions Are Under Attack

The author is executive director of District Council 37, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL–CIO

In the film *Silkwood* there is a scene with particular meaning for our times. It comes after Karen Silkwood has been exposed to radiation at her job and to a new consciousness by her union. She has become motivated to do something about the dangers in the Kerr-McGee plant, and she attempts to document incidents where the company's actions and policies have harmed or threatened workers.

The scene takes place in a company lunchroom where previously we have seen Karen moving easily and comfortably among her close friends and co-workers. Now, however, she is confronting them with a paper and pencil in hand. She is asking them to give her their personal experiences so she can document the company's carelessness and lack of concern for their safety. One by one, her fellow workers turn away from her. She's trying to protect them but they want no part of it. She's making waves, she's a pain-in-the-ass. In a matter of minutes they all walk out on her, leaving her alone in an empty lunchroom.

The scene rings very true. It's not easy to get people to recognize their own self-interest. That's the essence of a key problem faced by the American labor movement today and, for that matter, by the country.

Labor is "under attack," as we all know. Anti-union consultants have developed a major new industry selling eager management the skills to keep unions from organizing or to decertify existing unions. Givebacks and concessions by beleaguered unions are commonplace, particularly among the previous stalwarts of the American labor movement. Predictions of the future for unions, especially as the economy moves from manufacturing to service and high-tech, are dire.

What's different for the nation as a whole? All the verities of our society are "under attack," have been for years. The family, church, schools, neighborhoods, political parties, none of the old pillars of American society are what they were. Kids have freedom, capabilities, and dangers that make them a different breed than their parents, who were raised a generation ago. The schoolteacher is unionized, most schools reflect the quality of life around them: shocking problems in have-not communities, exemplary achievers in Scarsdale High. Jazz masses, activist priests and nuns are not news anymore. Look what happened to the work ethic. If Silkwood's co-workers shied away from her attempts to make them take responsibility for themselves, half of them don't vote either, and their spelling would probably make most readers of this magazine wince.

So it should be no surprise that societal changes that are reshaping the country are buffeting the trade unions, too. It's troubling, though, that commentators who, gleefully and otherwise, point to labor's problems fail to associate them directly with the problems confronting our entire population.

List the immediate dangers facing labor. Portability of capital: manufacturers can open plants anywhere in the world at a fraction of American labor costs. High technology will reduce the number of jobs available. The decline of smokestack America: steel and autos will never employ as many workers

(Continued on page 228)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Robert Lekachman

High Unemployment—What Will the Democrats Say?

February 25, 1984

Unemployment averaged 7.1 percent in 1977, declined in the next two years to 6.1 and 5.8 percent, and jumped upward again in 1980 to 1977's 7.1. For January 1981, the month the Carter administration departed, the statisticians registered a figure of 7.5 percent. As a 1980 candidate, Ronald Reagan quite properly excoriated Carter's job performance, and so stole the unemployment issue from its traditional Democratic custodians.

Such are the political ironies that the oddsmakers have declared Reagan a reelection favorite in part because, with luck, unemployment just might descend to the numerical neighborhood that four years ago Republicans decried as *utterly* unsatisfactory—after stopping in December 1982 just short of 11 percent.

The numbers tell a story. Since the mid-1970s, the incidence of joblessness has been persistently higher than it was in the three decades following World War II. During the eight-year period 1975–82, unemployment averaged 7.5 percent, compared to the 4.7 percent of 1967–74. Unmistakably, the unemployment of the 1980s is a troubling, *structural* problem responsive neither to Carter's timid version of the Great Society, the supply-side nostrums with which the Reagan administration deluded itself in 1981, nor yet the military Keynesianism to which it has more recently resorted. Ronald Reagan's "humdinger" of a recovery has done little for unemployed teen-agers, technologically displaced steel and auto workers, women, and minorities.

However, this Administration has excelled in adroitly blaming the victims of a malfunctioning economy and of its own policies. Echoing conventional conservative wisdom, Reagan and his associates habitually focus upon the asserted educational, moral, and attitudinal deficiencies of stigmatized welfare recipients, long-term unemployed, and poor people in general. These unworthy citizens are advised to reform and rejoin the middle-class celebration.

In this cynical endeavor, mainstream economists (Keynes's "horrid creatures") have aided and abetted the squelching of the unemployment issue. Their habit is to define as the so-called natural rate of unemployment a number that, according to professional speculation, is consistent with reasonably stable prices.

As the argument runs, should unemployment threaten to drift below 6.5 or even 7.0 percent, employers will be reduced to hiring inferior, less productive new workers. They will drive labor costs up, encourage more efficient colleagues to seek inflationary wage hikes, force employers to pass on larger labor costs to the customers, and set off a new round of wage demands and price responses. Conclusion: unless and until the skills and attitudes of the unemployed improve, we must accept high levels of unemployment or face the alternative of dangerous inflation.

In the current state of national amnesia, the country is in danger of forgetting the most important lesson John Maynard Keynes and World War II in tandem should have taught us: that who is employable depends strictly upon how badly employers need workers. In World War II, the American economy provisioned and armed 13 million men and women in uniform, diverted half the Gross

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

National Product to fighting a two-ocean war, and *at the same time* actually improved civilian living standards—all because hordes of young, old, female, black, unskilled, and "hard-core" unemployed persons previously dismissed as unemployable had become cherished contributors to the war effort.

In the 1980s as in World War II, full employment threatens inflation in the absence of appropriate public initiatives to restrain it. The alternative, now as earlier, to meek resignation in the presence of high "natural" rates of joblessness is a declaration of restraints upon key price-and-wage decisions. Outright controls worked exceedingly well in World War II, reasonably efficiently during the Korean conflict, and much better than anyone anticipated in the 1971-72 Nixon episode. We can afford to create enough new public jobs to supplement private-sector employment if Congress and the president act simultaneously to sponsor effective incomes policy.

HERE I REACH 1984'S DEPRESSING POLITICS. According to the usual authorities, Walter Mondale, the presumptive Democratic candidate, conducted a brilliant 1983 campaign. Never setting a foot wrong, he collected a garland of endorsements climaxed by NOW's first presidential intervention and his choice over Jesse Jackson by Alabama black Democrats. Earlier than usual, the National Education Association and the AFL–CIO aligned themselves under his banner.

However, on crucial foreign-policy and domestic issues Mondale has been, shall we say, cautious. His response to Grenada was evasive. His Latin American attitudes are murky, and the major difference between him and Caspar Weinberger on the swollen Pentagon budget appears to be the contrast between 5 and 10 percent annual increments. If anything, matters are worse on the domestic front. Mondale has retreated from advocacy of comprehensive health care to emphasis upon hospital-cost containment. Does anyone except health providers favor continuing escalation of hospital-room charges and physicians' fees? He has rejected as a canard the grave "charge" that he favors renewed public job-creation efforts. References in his speeches to the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment statute have been exceptional enough to qualify as collectors' items.

Just possibly such prudence will pay off in November. With cause, women and blacks may continue to be angry enough at Reagan to vote against him rather than in favor of a rival carefully colored light-gray. Recovery may slow or stop. The Administration's belligerency in foreign policy may frighten the electorate into a ballot for sobriety. To paraphrase William Safire, a presidential nosebleed may revive the age-and-health issue. But it is at least equally plausible to suggest that disaster abroad will be averted, recovery continue, and Democrats will discover that they lack, like Winston Churchill's unsatisfactory pudding, a theme. Should this second scenario approximate this summer's reality, Mondale stands in danger of losing the election out of terminal timidity.

MONDALE CAN AND SHOULD do better, as much in his own interest as in that of his party. In candor, the strategy I shall sketch might also fail against an opponent as lucky as Ronald Reagan. The failure will be perceived, I believe, as honorable and as a favorable omen for 1988. Mondale ought to grab the issue of full employment, organize a domestic agenda around it, and proclaim it to the public with passion and conviction. If I were writing The Speech for Mondale, the basic set of remarks that candidates reiterate around the country with suitable local variation, I should begin like this:

□

I AM PROUD that the Carter administration enacted the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment bill. I am ashamed as an American that the Reagan administration has cynically ignored its targets and goals. I say that a decent job is the right of every American who wants to work and earn his or her own living. As your next president, I pledge myself to make full employment my first priority.

To achieve full employment, we must face some changes in our habits of thought and the ways we conduct the nation's business. I ask you, at the outset, to reconsider our traditional custom of trashing government and glorifying private business. We are indeed an enterprise economy. We must rely upon private employers and risk-taking entrepreneurs to make the investment decisions, gamble upon new products and markets, and create jobs for ourselves and our sons and daughters. For the foreseeable future, most of us will be on private payrolls.

Nevertheless, for our own economic interest, we must recognize the creative role of government in our history and its creative potentialities for the future. My own roots are deep in the Minnesota soil. We have been blessed with a state university that owes its birth to the federal land grants of the last

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

century. The land-grant universities—in Michigan, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Ohio, Illinois, Texas, and California—have supported the research in cultivation and animal husbandry that has made American agriculture the world's most productive and American farmers an admired global elite.

Under public sponsorship in war and peace, American scientists and engineers have developed horrifying weapons. They are responsible also for the triumphs of space technology.

I do not underestimate the challenges of paying for health care that reaches the poorest of our fellow citizens. I want at the same time to celebrate medical triumphs—the conquest of polio and other infectious diseases, open-heart surgery, and encouraging improvements in cancer survival rates. All have been made possible by generous public funding and creative federal bureaucrats in the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

At its best, government is not a burden to be lifted from our backs, as this Administration endlessly insists. It can play the role that it had in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, helping all of us to become all that we can be.

I have a vision to share with you. As we look around us, we see urgent, unfilled, or poorly met needs—libraries open a few hours each week, undermaintained and underprotected parks, sketchily staffed social services, and deteriorating roads, bridges, sewers, power lines, buses, and subways. Unless, like the president's friend and counselor Ed Meese, we are wilfully blind, we see desperate men, women, and, yes, children lined up at shelters, soup kitchens, cheese distribution depots, and welfare centers—humiliated by their plight and eager to play productive roles in the American economy.

I do not dodge the difficulty of matching public needs with the people capable of filling them. Success demands imagination in the design of training and retraining programs. I hope to summon the spirit of World War II, a time when a much smaller economy supported armies and navies in Europe and Asia, put to work millions of men and women regarded as unemployable, and simultaneously raised living standards on the home front.

How will we pay for new programs of public construction, public employment, and education and training? *Ultimately, full employment is self-financing.* The Treasury will collect much larger tax revenues from a fully employed nation than it derives from a labor force in which one out of every dozen workers is unemployed.

In the short run, we must raise taxes. Therefore, I shall urge Congress to raise additional sums from the large corporations and rich individuals who have reaped the bulk of the Reagan administration's harvest of tax breaks. I shall supplement these sums with savings from Pentagon appropriations.

Inflation is the enemy of full employment. It is the excuse our Republican opponents use to justify running the economy at the 7 or 8 percent unemployment levels that some economists call the "natural" rate of unemployment. I say it is unnatural and un-American to make 10 million Americans pay the price of idleness and dependency, so that the rest of us can enjoy stable prices.

It is also unnecessary. In my first State of the Union message to Congress and the nation, I shall propose measures to make noninflationary behavior profitable to both management and labor. I shall offer tax benefits to corporate price-setters and union negotiators who conform to public standards of price-and-wage conduct.

I believe that a fully employed, noninflationary economy represents our best hope of domestic tranquillity and our best prospect of rapid progress toward the legitimate goals of the New Deal and the Great Society—health protection for every American, decent homes, job security, abolition of poverty, completion of our progress toward racial and sexual equality, and the American aspiration for new

Dissent at 30

. . . Of course there are also the first few issues of the fourth decade of *Dissent*, which Howe and his coeditors are planning. One animating idea will be there, as always: the quaint, old-fashioned notion that political democracy must remain the essential core of any socialist movement worthy of the name. It's an idea *Dissent* has been hammering at for 30 years. Yet it can't be repeated too often. There will always be people thinking of themselves as leftists who find it a wearying, boring, inconvenient idea—but that's their political problem, not *Dissent*'s.

— *by Sol Stern,* in the *Village Voice*, Feb. 14, 1984 □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opportunities and better lives for our children and grandchildren. Let us continue this quest.

□

MONDALE—or whoever will emerge as the final candidate—may lose with this appeal to Democratic continuity. The mood of the country might be as mean and conservative as some of the pollsters conclude from their data. If they are right, the public will almost surely prefer a genuine reactionary to a timid centrist. But I can't help reiterating my gut sense that the Democrats are well launched on a losing campaign, one that might—just possibly—be transformed by a touch of audacity. □

Peter Steinfels

Winter Thoughts on the Freeze

Pursuing a halt to the arms race is like unraveling a ball of snarled string. Half a dozen promising strands hang loose. You take up first one, then another, untwisting, disentangling—will this be the thread that finally releases the whole clump? Again, frustration. SALT II, START, MX, the freeze, Euromissiles; by the end of 1983, it seemed that each possibility had ended in yet another unyielding knot. The *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* moved its clock hands closer to midnight. The Administration beckoned Moscow to new talks. American peace activists looked to the '84 elections. European demonstrators regrouped. A momentary calm, deathly calm perhaps, allowed for some reflection.

My own reflections have to do with the old problem of reconciling complexity, expertise—intellectual integrity, if you will—with effective political mobilization. It was hardly astonishing that, in the last two years of accelerating antinuclear agitation, liberals should reject the relatively small segment of the peace movement that showed itself consistently pro-Soviet. Nor was it surprising that liberals distanced themselves from the more innocent activists who dream of dropping all the nukes in the sea tomorrow—were that not ecologically unsound. What was surprising, at least to me, was the distinct coolness that influential liberals, who hold no brief for the Reagan arms policies, often manifested for the mainstream of the antinuclear effort and its political centerpiece, the freeze.

This coolness was expressed in scolding editorials and columns in such places as the *New York Times*, the *New Republic*, and the *Washington Post*. I saw it reflected in more than one public discussion—at an arms-control panel last year, for example, where every panelist quickly dismissed the freeze in favor of one or another more "realistic" and relevant measure.

I do not mean to debate the relative merits of these different proposals. Given sufficient specification and qualification, the freeze can be defended—and there are a number of well-qualified experts who have done so—although it eventually becomes a mere cousin of the sweeping measure that captured public enthusiasm. At the same time, there are in fact alternative approaches that strike me as equally if not more promising. What cannot be ignored, however, and it kept coming to my mind during that panel discussion, is that none of these allegedly more realistic arms-limitation proposals would even be on the political agenda were it not for the grass-roots movement that had been galvanized by the simple, direct message of the freeze.

Maybe there's a paradox here. If so, it should not strain the intellects of those who repeatedly insist that we must comprehend the paradox of deterrence. A system of mutual holocaust is perfected precisely in order to assure that the system is never set into motion; or as Churchill said, safety is made the sturdy child of terror. A peace movement is organized around a simple, sweeping goal with the effect that we can achieve more detailed, modest agreements. The latter proposition has its problems, to which I will return; it opens the door to all

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sorts of demagoguery. But those resigned to living with the former paradox can hardly reject the latter one out of hand.

TODAY'S PEACE MOVEMENT is effective because it has operated at two levels. On the one hand, it represents a widespread revulsion from the Administration's apparently open-ended and casual commitment to further nuclear armament. This revulsion was distilled into the call for a freeze. At the same time, an extraordinary division arose among the strategic specialists, the defense elite. This crisis had been brewing ever since the increased accuracy of weapons threatened the premises of deterrence by Mutual Assured Destruction. It then was brought to a boil by the Reagan administration's announced belief in Soviet strategic superiority, in the "window of vulnerability," and in prolonged nuclear war fighting. The revolt of the elite was symbolized most dramatically by the "no-first-use" proposal advanced in *Foreign Affairs* by four elder statesmen of American defense policy; in effect, McNamara, Bundy, Kennan, and Smith were challenging a pillar of the East-West strategy they had themselves devised and administered.

Populist thinkers may not like to acknowledge it, but grass-roots movements in America, at least when they question the status quo, badly need exactly this sort of elite and "expert" component, both to legitimate their concerns in the all-important eyes of the media and to translate those concerns into specific measures. Likewise, elite criticism without a strong grass-roots movement is apt to be only marginally effective if not completely compromised. When the right can generate tons of mail over so absurdly peripheral an issue as the Panama Canal treaty, no program of arms limitation will get anywhere without a similarly aroused popular backing. In the case of nuclear arms, the two components, popular and elite, neatly converged.

Converged, but never coincided. Many freeze supporters have remained wary of complex arms-control proposals. Their technical labyrinths not only leave the public glassy-eyed, dampening the moral fervor without which no reform movement accomplishes anything in America; they also seem to offer dangerous leeway for obscure alterations that gut their ostensible purpose of restraining the arms race. Then, too, many of the "expert" proposals point toward more weaponry—the buildup of conventional forces in Europe, for example, to substitute for the reliance on a "first-use" threat to deter any Warsaw Pact conventional attack, or the deployment of a new mobile, single-warhead missile like "Midgetman" to decrease vulnerability and reverse the belatedly acknowledged dangers of MIRVing. None of this is likely to sit easily with anger at high military spending and with suspicion that such fancy arms-control measures as SALT I and II had made things worse rather than better.

Yet despite the distance between the grass-roots antinuclear movement and the elite dissidents, there was little reason for direct conflict. There was no reason why one couldn't endorse the freeze idea generally—as the Catholic bishops did—and urge that a variety of other measures be pursued as well. First come, first served. To my mind, this approach made more sense than criticism of the freeze for the difficulties it might pose for negotiating or implementation.

For one thing, there has never been any evidence that the broad constituency rallying to the freeze would refuse to support other alternatives that promised a similar breakthrough in arms control. In addition, and this is really my central point: a politically effective initiative like the freeze deserves to be evaluated not only, perhaps not primarily, on its technical merits (aren't the specifics always reshaped as such proposals are filtered through the policy machinery?) but rather on the kind of political conviction it reinforces in the citizenry. This is the criterion that allows us to distinguish between constructive and demagogic appeals—all of which will inevitably be rather simplified and sweeping by the standards of the *New Republic* or the Kennedy School of Government.

THE CONVICTIONS THE FREEZE NURTURES strike me as essentially sound:

- First, that the way out of the superpowers' nuclear tangle has got to be *mutual*—no other word in the freeze litany was so important in garnering widespread support.
- Second, that the superpowers' arsenals were sufficiently matched for deterrence to work; panic about the U.S. having to play catch-up was baseless.
- Third, that new nuclear systems were far more likely to destabilize than control the balance of terror; given the record, the burden of proof—the heavy burden of proof—ought to rest on proponents of any new system; in any case, the constant pressure of emerging weapons made negotiations difficult, and some of the weapons threatened to make verification impossible.

About deterrence, the freeze movement was in principle neutral. It only demanded a halt in fur-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ther armament; how far actual *dis*armament might someday go was left to the future. Clearly, the freeze was congenial to many people who do not reconcile themselves to nuclear weapons at all and therefore balk at deterrence as a permanent or semipermanent fact of life. This ambiguity in turn raised the hackles of those who believe that a clear-minded commitment to deterrence is the beginning of all serious thinking about nuclear weapons, including all serious criticism of the Administration's grandiose designs.

This last conflict notwithstanding, there is something preposterous about commentators warning that the freeze is "unrealistic," when they are themselves totally unrealistic about achieving arms control without *some* such broad, morally compelling appeal that can mobilize great numbers of citizens. In fact, the freeze has always been under pressure, generated both within and outside its ranks, to move toward a unilaterist stance. Liberal critics would have been much wiser to urge resistance to this development than to question generally an effective vehicle of political education and organization.

WHO KNOWS, THE FREEZE MAY not play the central role in the next phase of the American peace movement that it did in the last. But then—if there is to be a peace movement at all—some other such animating idea will. And the same problem will be posed: what inevitably simplified, emotionally and morally charged standard can mobilize grass-roots opposition to the arms race without doing dangerous injustice to the complexities of the problem?

The test ought not to be whether such a rallying cry is negotiable in Geneva but whether it fosters a realistic understanding of the nuclear dilemma, as I believe the freeze proposal has, in Peoria. □

John C. Cort

The Bishops Confront Capitalism

The Catholic bishops hadn't even produced any part of a first draft of their pastoral letter on "Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy," when *Business Week* and *Fortune* started whimpering. *Business Week* (12/19/83) quoted such authorities as Van P. Smith, Catholic businessman of Muncie, Indiana: "I would be exceedingly disappointed if the Church took a position that was critical [of capitalism]." *Fortune* (12/26/83) tried the strategy of direct insult. Anticipating that the bishops would come out with something as subversive as their Canadian colleagues' statement, *Fortune* charged: "The bishops gravitate toward such formulations because socialism gives them a role to play, while capitalism—reliance on impersonal market forces—leaves them out in the cold."

All this because Notre Dame's College of Business Administration hosted a public conference, December 12–14, 1983, to advise the bishops' five-man committee that is preparing the pastoral letter. The guest list was not exactly a roll call of revolutionaries. The first day featured two vice-presidents of General Motors and the chairman of Lehman Brothers, Kuhn, Loeb. If the bishops are going to be critical of capitalism, it will certainly be on the best evidence.

THE FOLLOWING is not so much a summary of the proceedings as a sampling of quotes or ideas that caught the eye while reading the "experts' " papers (averaging 40 pages each) or the ear while listening to their summaries and the discussions that followed. Speakers are listed in order of appearance.

Gar Alperovitz, National Center for Economic Alternatives: "We are told that we must curtail social programs, that we cannot assist the poor, that we cannot assist other nations. This is *prima facie* nonsense. We have what it takes to provide a decent life for all members of our society." Alperovitz noted that right now our Gross National Product averages out to $60,000 per family of four.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He cited the examples of France, Germany, Japan, and Sweden over the years 1959–76 to show that more intelligent planning could have kept millions of idle Americans working without excessive inflation, adding as much as $3.8 trillion to our GNP and $750 billion to federal revenue. Alperovitz quoted John Paul's encyclical *Laborem Exercens* to underline the fact that the responsibility for the "overall planning" necessary for full employment "weighs on the shoulders of the state" but should be implemented without "one-sided centralization" and *with* democratic forms of decision-making.

Peter Peterson, Lehman Brothers, secretary of commerce in Nixon's cabinet: "More planning would create more problems. . . . Don't remove the safety net for the truly needy, but cut down the padded hammock for the middle and upper-middle class." Peterson wants to cut Social Security and Medicare for those who don't need it and eliminate cost-of-living raises. Less consumption and more saving for investment.

Alperovitz was not as effective as he might have been in challenging this unqualified put-down of consumption. It is time we started emphasizing demand-side economics. Peterson did favor defense cuts.

Marina von Neumann Whitman, glamorous GM vice-president and chief economist: "I rather like our chaotic, decentralized decision-making." She gave a nod to worker participation ("cooperation") at the workplace, and favored more "profit-sharing in the compensation package"; this is in welcome contrast to GM's horror when Walter Reuther proposed more of both back in the '50s.

Elmer Johnson, genial GM vice-president in charge of public affairs: "The ultimate goals of economic policy are an adequate level of material well-being for all persons and meaningful work for all persons able and willing to work." One could not help thinking, Do you really believe that, Elmer? Still, it was nice of him to say it. He also, in a refreshing display of intracorporate disagreement, seemed to favor "an Industrial Cooperation Act, legislation that would establish a commission composed of top representatives from labor, management, and government, [and] assigned responsibility for identifying the sources of these adversary tensions and proposing new mechanisms of cooperation."

Ms. Whitman opposed such a commission, obviously seeing it as the labor-camel's nose under the tent of participation in national economic planning: "The inevitable result would be greater politicization of economic processes and more rather than less adversarial relationships." This was a most significant difference of opinion.

Daniel Finn, economist and theologian from St. John's University, Minnesota: Quoted Thomas Aquinas ("Whatever can be rectified by reason is a matter of moral virtue"), Michael Harrington, Barry Bluestone, Lester Thurow ("To compete, we need the national equivalent of a corporate investment committee. Major investment decisions have become too important to be left to the private market alone, but a way must be found to incorporate private corporate planning into this process in a nonadversary way. Japan, Inc., needs to be met with U.S.A., Inc.").

Finn: "If Elmer Johnson's 'ultimate goals' mean 'most basic' and not 'far off and utopian,' then critics of planning should provide concrete suggestions for transforming the plight of the 36 million poor and the 10 million unemployed workers in the nation." Good point.

Joseph Pichler, president of the Dillon Companies: "We're born with the right to liberty, not with the right to work." Capitalism and John Paul II agree "that there should be a national commitment to full employment." Where did Pichler get that reading of capitalism? He reminded the Church that it should set a good example in its hospitals, schools, and colleges on such matters as discrimination and "the right of collective bargaining."

Ray Marshall, secretary of labor in Carter's cabinet: Defended the CETA programs (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973) against all critics and advocated planning with force and intelligence.

Rudy Oswald, AFL–CIO research director: Was invited to the program too late to prepare a paper, but this gave him a chance to improvise effectively in challenging Pichler's more unreasonable statements. He scored in emphasizing Greyhound's insistence that its bus drivers were earning too much, while its chief executive was taking a raise from $400,000 to $500,000. Oswald was the only union representative on the formal program, but several others (Sol Chaikin, Ladies Garment Workers' president, and Bob Harbrandt, Food & Commercial Workers' vice-president) participated in discussions and were after-dinner speakers.

Father David Hollenbach, S.J., theologian, Weston School of Theology, Cambridge: Took issue with Marcuse quoting C. B. Chisholm, "The necessity to work is a neurotic symptom." Made a strong case, basing it on Catholic social teaching, that work is both a right and a privilege. But he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

distinguished between negative rights: legal immunities from coercion, such as freedom of religion, speech, assembly, due process, on the one hand, and positive rights, on the other: the rights to work, food, housing, health care, social security, which demand action rather than restraint on the part of society and the state. Advocated "not socialism" but "a mixed economy model giving labor, management, and the several levels of government some say in the structure of the production and distribution of jobs. . . . Justice as participation." Another vote for planning, full employment, and economic democracy.

Michael Novak, American Enterprise Institute: Novak has gone from speechwriter for George McGovern in 1972 to Reagan's house theologian in 1980, which is fast traveling, considering the distance. Earlier, he has written: (1) "Church authorities have only a very weak authority, indeed, for their pronouncements in the area of economics and Christianity and their proper relation"; (2) "The Gospel seems to treat riches and poverty as irrelevant."

The bishops were kinder in their reception of Novak than one member of the congregation who pointed out that, in view of the hard sayings that Jesus directed repeatedly at rich people and his closing the gates of heaven to those who don't treat the poor with justice and generosity, it followed that Novak knew little about Christianity. Novak spoke on "The Poor and the Disadvantaged" and said nothing very memorable, but one might conclude that, contrary to his stated belief, poverty *is* relevant to a Christian.

Graciela Olivarez, Hispanic attorney, former director of Community Services under Carter: In the lamentable absence of any black advocate on the formal program, Ms. Olivarez was the only minority representative. Faulty programming by Notre Dame. She made an able case for the poor and, like several other speakers, argued strongly for putting the unemployed to work at repairing and improving the nation's infrastructure: roads, mass transit, bridges, pollution control, health and detention facilities.

Dennis McCann, theologian, DePaul University: Took off from Socrates' City of Pigs, the "feverish, luxurious city" in Plato's *Republic*, proceeded to an interesting comparison of John Rawls's theories of justice with those of the "Right Reverend New Dealer," John A. Ryan, and he concluded that "Full employment, once again, must become a national priority." But when *was* it ever a national priority?

BUT WHAT OF THE BISHOPS in all this? All of them had something to say at one time or another.

Archbishop Thomas Donellan of Atlanta had told *Business Week*, "If you want a token conservative, I'm it." Let's take him at his word.

Bishop George Speltz of St. Cloud, Minnesota, also came across somewhat on the conservative side, but genuinely concerned about the plight of family farmers, who can use a little genuine concern.

The two younger members of the committee, *Bishop William Weigand* of Salt Lake City and *Bishop Peter Rosazza*, a bearded auxiliary from Hartford (and who was the last bearded Catholic bishop in America?), both have had substantial experience as missionaries in Latin America. Their "commitment to the poor" was outspoken and obvious.

The swing man then is the committee's chairman, *Archbishop Rembert Weakland* of Milwaukee. I could detect nothing weak about Weakland. For many years the international head of the Benedictine Order, he has traveled all over the world and seen, like Weigand and Rosazza, more of the terrible poverty of people of various races, nations, and classes than the white, middle-class American males who were so prominent at that conference at Notre Dame.

THE FIRST DRAFT won't be released until after the election, to avoid the appearance of partisanship, the second in May 1985, and the final pastoral letter probably in November 1985. By now some 15 sessions have been held, and scores of witnesses and "experts" have been invited, including our own Michael Harrington. If you want a clue as to how the first draft will read, I can suggest nothing better than the following from the discussion period during the session on "The Poor and the Disadvantaged."

Robert Ashmore, a professor of philosophy at Marquette University, Milwaukee, led off with some basic questions: "Isn't there a radical opposition between Catholic social teaching and the American economy? The teaching is grounded in the Gospel, and how can you read it except that it's the poor who are blessed, that perfection requires the reduction of material desires, and the wealthy are by definition on the way to hell? How do you square the theological and philosophical advocacy of higher values with an American economic philosophy that encourages pursuit of material objectives, measures the success of an economic enterprise in terms of stimulating consumer demand? In

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other words, what would happen to the American economy if everybody obeyed the Gospel?"

The moderator ignored these questions and went on to other questioners. A few minutes later, Archbishop Weakland asked for the floor and said, "First of all, I think Bob Ashmore's question is more serious than we took it to be. The beatitude is: Blessed are the poor, not blessed is poverty! Certainly, Jesus did everything he could to heal the sick and feed the poor. . . . "

At that point my tape ran out, but that was enough for me. □

Jack Beatty

Boston Elects an "Urban Populist" Mayor

For the first time in 16 years, Boston has a new mayor, former South Boston State Representative and City Councilor Ray Flynn, and he has become a cynosure of hope for many. Flynn's record, however, is not such as to warrant great expectations. During the busing crisis a decade ago, for example, then State Representative Flynn introduced a bill to abolish compulsory public education, hoping thus to relieve South Boston of the necessity of complying with a federal court order to integrate its high school. He also opposed a bill to create a black Senate district in Roxbury, was coauthor of a bill that would deny abortions to women on Medicaid, voted to repeal the state's racial imbalance law and voted against a program to bus inner-city black children to suburban high schools. And yet, this is the same man the liberal *Boston Globe* says "will prove a compelling and convincing advocate for racial tolerance in the white community."

What's going on here? Growth, say his liberal admirers; Ray Flynn has grown. The evidence is in his campaign rhetoric about wanting to represent all of the city's neighborhoods—white, Latino, and black; in his selection of a former SDS member to run his campaign, as well as in his radical promise to "decentralize power," from the mayor's office to neighborhood councils; and in the endorsements he received from progressive citizen groups, such as Mass. Fair Share, women's organizations like Nine to Five, and insurgent unions like the Hotel and Restaurant Workers.

This may or may not be evidence of "growth"; it is certainly evidence of Flynn's ability to count. Boston voters have consistently rejected mayoral candidates who espoused the politics of racial polarization, a fact not lost on Flynn, whose predecessor in South Boston's City Council seat, Louise Day Hicks, was never able to extend her appeal decisively beyond Southie. Flynn succeeded where she failed. He did it partly by attending to the municipal needs of constituents all over the city during his years as councilor, partly by having the luck to run in a crowded primary where his South Boston base told far more than it would in a sparser field, and partly by having as his opponent in the general election a black radical who spoke well of Yasir Arafat, accused Boston's late, lamented Cardinal of anti-Semitism, and generally acted as if he were a candidate for a position on the *Village Voice*, not for mayor of this Catholic city.

Ray Flynn did something else, too, that not only helped him to win but also may help him to govern. He changed the subject. For 20 years, Boston's politics have revolved around the integration of its schools and neighborhoods. During that time, the city lost 25 percent of its white population, and it would have lost more if race had remained the subject. But Ray Flynn changed the subject from race to class; the public language from morals to economics; the politics from a divisive juridical liberalism to a unifying "urban populism" that addressed what South Boston and Roxbury have in common, the substantial poverty of their residents.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That is why Ray Flynn has stirred hope in Boston. He changed the subject, but it will take more than political imagination to change the realities.

Of the nation's 30 largest cities, Boston ranks 26th in median family income, right down there with Cleveland and Newark. Only 25 percent of Bostonians, as opposed to 61 percent of Philadelphians, own their homes, and 20 percent fall below the poverty line. At the same time, 33 percent hold professional or managerial jobs. These better-off Bostonians work in the high-rise office buildings that have sprouted downtown over the last 20 years, while neighborhoods, schools, and public housing have deteriorated.

These statistics from the 1980 Census reveal a two-class city. One is made up of gentrifiers and professionals; the other of service workers who live in the city's ethnically distinct neighborhoods and protect, barber, care for the children of, type the letters and clean the streets for the gentrifiers.

Kevin White, who stepped down in January after 16 years in office, was the perennial candidate of the new Boston, which he did as much as anyone to create. Ray Flynn was the candidate of the other Boston—of Dorchester, not Beacon Hill; of Hyde Park, not the Back Bay; of South Boston, not Roxbury.

Roxbury's candidate, longtime State Representative Mel King, argued that there were not just two Bostons but three, and that the third Boston suffered from racism as well as from poverty. Flynn's nearly 3:1 defeat of King in a vote "starkly," as the *Globe* put it, along racial lines, served to underscore King's contention that the face of inequality in Boston is most likely to be black. Job opportunities for blacks in Boston have declined ominously since 1970, and surveys have found that minorities face discrimination in 85 percent of the city's neighborhoods. Blacks can't swim at the city's beaches, which are in South Boston, live in Charlestown, or walk the streets of the Italian North End without fear. Mel King is right: there are three Bostons. In the campaign, Ray Flynn did not deny this, but he insisted that the issues dividing two of them were not so powerful as the lack of life chances, the run-down neighborhoods and housing their people had in common.

Ray Flynn boasts a resonant Boston biography. He is the grandson of Irish immigrants, the son of a South Boston longshoreman and a cleaning woman. When Ray was a small boy his father came down with tuberculosis, forcing his mother to go on welfare for a time. This early exposure to the hazards of life left Flynn with an authentic social conscience. Anyone who knows his background, or has seen his face redden in rage at the mention of "welfare chiselers," can't doubt that he meant what he said when he pledged in his inaugural that the test of Boston's greatness under his administration will be how it cares for its poor, its sick, and its vulnerable people. Flynn, 44, his wife, and six small children live in a Dickensianly humble house in South Boston; the new mayor drives a beat-up station wagon; and calls himself an "urban populist."

What links this urban populist to the antibusing activist of a decade ago? A short answer is that they espouse the same values but in different contexts. Then Flynn's issue was neighborhood stability; now it is neighborhood revival. Because of his antibusing past, his proponents argue, Flynn can do much to improve the city's racial climate. He is the first Boston mayor from South Boston; the people there are very proud of him; and they will try hard to "come over," as Southern whites say, with him on the race issue. A crucial moment will come this summer, when Flynn's promise to open the city's beaches to all its citizens will be put to the test.

By practicing the media politics at which he is adept, Flynn can set a powerful example on race. Increasing the incomes and enhancing the life chances of Bostonians will prove much the more difficult task. Flynn promises better neighborhood services and backs a linkage proposal that would require corporations building downtown to contribute to a neighborhood development fund. That will moderate the esthetic differences between the two Bostons.

WHAT OF THE ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES? Flynn can tax commuters; back unions for the city's many hotel, hospital, and university workers; try to improve the city's poor schools; lure light industry back to the city with tax concessions; and set up city-run day-care centers, so that more Bostonians can work to increase their families' income.

In these and other ways the public sector can add to the wealth of a city. But it cannot create many jobs and, with nearly half the city's property occupied by tax-exempt charitable institutions, it can't raise more money from taxes to do all the good things Ray Flynn wants to do.

Boston will need help from the state and federal governments. Connecticut pays the city of Hartford for the use of its cultural institutions; Massachusetts could do the same for Boston. But if Ray Flynn is to keep his promises to give Boston's poor a fairer deal, he will need help from Washington. What Jane Jacobs calls the "city-killing" federal expenditure on defense continues to drain wealth

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from Boston. The federal highway program, the federally assisted urban renewal program, and the federal tax subsidy on home mortgages have done much to hasten the movement of jobs and people out of Boston over the last generation. If the federal government put its weight behind improving city schools, if it gave companies tax write-offs for training new workers, if it heavily increased spending on restoring the city's infrastructure, if it helped fund subways and high-speed trains linking the city with the far suburbs where the good jobs are, then Boston's dreary neighborhoods might revive, its people might dispose of more income, and its future might redeem Ray Flynn's promises.

CLEARLY, THEN THE PROMISE of Flynn's administration, as of Boston itself, rests to a large extent on the outcome of the 1984 presidential election. □

Pershings Over Europe?

The deployment of new missiles in Europe has occasioned severe differences of opinion within the European socialist community as well as among other Europeans. Such differences, of course, also exist on this side of the Atlantic. Below we print two brief comments on this issue by two editors of Dissent. *Reasoned comments from readers are welcome.* — EDS.

No — Bogdan Denitch

There is no valid argument for stationing the new U.S. missiles in Western Europe. It has been an open secret among military "experts"—left, right and center—that the major function of these Pershings and cruises is psychological. They are to demonstrate the unity of the Western Alliance and its ability to assert its will. The supposed need for this demonstration of unity and will stems from two or three assumptions, all wrong, about the nature of the military balance between the two blocs.

One reason, originally put forward to coax the West Germans into "requesting" the missiles, is the need to clearly link the defense of Western Europe to the U.S. strategic deterrent. In plain language: the installed missiles are to dispel the Europeans' increasing doubts that the U.S. would risk a strategic nuclear exchange—all-out war—in response to a Soviet attack on Western Europe.

In a rare moment of frankness, Henry Kissinger told the NATO allies that the United States would hardly risk New York and Washington to defend, say, Hamburg or Berlin against an attack not directed at the U.S. And exactly because the Europeans sense this limitation of America's commitment, it was necessary to install the intermediate-range missiles in Western Europe, which could respond to a Soviet attack or the threat of it. But since no one in Europe will accept nuclear missiles with a German (even democratic West German) finger on the nuclear trigger, and as NATO can hardly have a finger on the trigger while excluding the Germans, the new missiles will have to be under U.S. control.

This "solution" presents many problems—most important: (1) it is to avert a prospect no military expert has claimed exists: a Soviet attack on Western Europe short of an all-out nuclear war; (2) it seems to exacerbate a problem it was supposed to solve: the West European unease with the Alliance and increasing fear that the United States may prove irresponsible in matters of security.

THE ORIGINAL PROBLEM that gave rise to these difficulties first surfaced during the Carter administration but had its roots in the American preoccupation with Vietnam at the expense of military security elsewhere. It was the perception in the United States that, during the '70s, the balance

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

between the two superpowers and their blocs had tilted against the West.

In the period from the end of the Second World War until the mid-'60s, the United States had a clear military superiority, both in conventional and nuclear weapons. But then, from the '60s on, a rough parity began to develop between the two superpowers. This parity in turn facilitated negotiations toward arms control. Clearly, no substantive negotiations were possible that would freeze either side into what it perceived as a position of inferiority. And American hawks, both liberal and conservative, refuse to accept parity. To accept parity, after all, is to accept long-term coexistence. In domestic politics, abstract moralizing about the Soviet Union and theoretic rejection of coexistence has remained immensely popular. The Soviets are both feared and distrusted, and quite properly so. But this is precisely the reason why negotiations and arms-control treaties are essential.

One of the basic problems with past arms-control agreements and the kind of détente accompanying them was that they led to exaggerated, great expectations, especially for the American public. Yet, for the Soviets, agreements on nuclear arms control and on a relative balance in conventional arms never implied that the political maneuvering for advantage, in the Third World or elsewhere, would cease.

Arms negotiations, of course, did not really mean that for the U.S. either—but our politics now are fatally marred by a degree of sanctimoniousness not seen since the days of Woodrow Wilson.

An oversold détente, in the Carter era, was becoming for many a symbol of American weakness vis-à-vis the Soviets. It was, however, the normal acceptance of the reality of another global power that was attacked as weakness, and "defeats" in the Third World were seen as the result of meddling by the Soviets or their "proxies."

Now, if all our troubles were caused by "the Evil Empire" and by the shift in military superiority that now allowed this wretched Soviet Sparta to challenge our Athens, clearly, one solution would be a military buildup. Of course, one of the problems with this Sparta-Athens analogy is that most of us forget that Athens, on the whole, was the one that tended to be more adventurous. Knowing this, I rather like the analogy and find it instructive to be able to say to myself, Yes, unquestionably, the West (and the United States especially) is clearly the more civil and surely the more democratic society—but also, at this point, the more dangerous power, playing games with war and peace that imperil us all.

THE MILITARY BUILDUP did begin under Carter, and it has continued at an ever greater pace under the present Administration. And in this area, there's no hesitation to "throw money at problems." But the problem in the real world is that the new American preoccupation with military strength is very costly indeed, and it is becoming ever more difficult to convince our NATO partners to share this burden. There are three simple reasons for their reluctance to jump into an arms race: (1) Soviet trade is far more important to the Europeans than to the Americans; (2) most of our European allies have armies based on conscription, and therefore believe that they are contributing very substantially to the common defense of Western Europe; (3) our NATO allies do not really think that a war between the two blocs is likely in Europe—and this judgment constitutes a fatal weakness from the American point of view.

The problem therefore, from the American hawks' point of view, is how to get the European allies to comply with our way of viewing—and tackling—the defense of Western Europe. It's quite a problem to accomplish this when no one, at least no one I have heard of, believes that the Soviets' precarious occupation of Afghanistan and the continual need for policing their own bloc, as in Poland, will allow them to pursue a more aggressive policy toward Western Europe.

Consequently, there is now some serious uneasiness in the relations between the United States and Western Europe. While West Europeans have been raising doubts about the reliability of the U.S. within the old NATO framework, the Americans have deplored the West Europeans' "self-Finlandization," implying that the Social Democratic parties are getting soft on Soviet totalitarianism. This brings us back to the Kissinger remark: why should the U.S. risk its cities for your sake if you are not absolutely reliable allies?

How better, then, to show reliability than by accepting the Pershing and cruise missiles? Here we get to an elegant proposition: the less sensible and rational the deployment, the better a symbol of reliability is a government's willingness to accept them. Do the missiles make your country an obvious target for Soviet missiles? What better proof, then, of your loyalty to the alliance! Do the missiles make no military sense? They don't, but they show your willingness to accept the U.S. as senior partner in the alliance, and not only the U.S. finger on the trigger but also U.S. judgment about what is needed for the defense of your country. To cite an American general, quoted in the London *Times* last October, "anyone who believes that the call for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the missiles originated in Europe must believe in Santa Claus."

From my point of view, the deployment of U.S. missiles has had a constructive effect: it has increased West European tendencies toward independence from both military blocs. The Soviet increase in intermediate missiles stationed in Eastern Europe—which indeed has sparked this whole mess—has created not only the beginning of a peace movement in some East European countries but also resistance from Warsaw Pact partners in welcoming Soviet missiles: three Warsaw Pact countries are not accepting them. It has also had the constructive effect of building a massive peace movement in Western Europe, on the whole, free from illusions about the Soviet bloc. The costs in terms of a new arms race and a very dangerously destabilizing introduction of new missile systems are, however, too great. Here we come to the nub of the question: Do the new missiles help strengthen the defense of Western Europe, and if they do, is that a good thing?

Three objections have been raised against the new missiles. First, the cruise missiles can be armed with either conventional or nuclear warheads. There is no way of telling the difference without an on-site inspection. Their use makes the problem of inspection and control in any nuclear arms-control agreement all but impossible. Second, this introduces U.S.-controlled missiles of a new type at the border of the territory of the Soviet alliance. The analogy would be Soviet missiles in Cuba; and we should remember the U.S. response to that. And so this will lead to the stationing of Soviet nuclear subs as close as possible to our coastline, hardly increasing anyone's security. Third, there is the nasty question of timing linked to the sharp increase of possible conflict through error. The new missiles are very accurate and thus possible first-strike weapons: they take between five and nine minutes to reach Soviet targets.

Five to nine minutes to check for possible error in Soviet computers and radar! It makes one's blood run cold to have to rely on Soviet technology to that extent. . . . Anyone who has the slightest idea of how many false alarms our own much more advanced warning systems have set off in the past few years should sleep less securely, knowing that what stands between a Soviet false alarm and our own safety is the level of technology demonstrated in the case of the Korean airliner 007.

There is no justification for these missiles. □

Yes—Dennis Wrong

The deployment of new missiles in Europe has begun on schedule in accordance with the NATO double decision of 1979, the Geneva talks having failed to produce an agreement limiting the numbers of missiles on both sides. It will be another five years before the new NATO missiles are fully operational and much can happen in the interval, including the return of the Soviet Union to the talks it has broken off at the time of writing. But the Atlantic alliance has undeniably won a victory in proceeding smoothly to carry out its decision in face of intense domestic opposition in West Germany and Britain, encouraged and often promoted by the Soviet Union.

Why did the Soviet Union during the years of *détente* install new and more deadly missiles aimed at Western Europe? There can scarcely be anyone in Washington or the major European capitals who truly believes that they were (or are) intended to support a planned military invasion of the German Federal Republic. It would be in poor grace for one who is no expert on military matters to dismiss altogether the relevance of the military balance, both nuclear and conventional, between the Warsaw Pact and NATO forces, but the *political* effects of military power have been from the beginning the primary consideration. After all, the Soviet Union's strategic intercontinental missiles have always been capable of striking Western Europe as well as the United States. NATO was created to provide forces sufficient to make deterrence of a Soviet attack credible, but for nearly 40 years the Soviet Union has had preponderance in both nuclear and conventional strength, an advantage that will not be eliminated by the new Pershing II and Cruise missiles.

Even if the Russians originally installed their first SS–20s in a fit of absentmindedness, blithely anticipating no response from the U.S. or NATO, Helmut Schmidt's famous speech of 1977, which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

led to the NATO decision two years later, must have quickly disillusioned them. At the time, Schmidt himself was under fire from the anti-Atlanticist left in his own party, as was the Labour government then in office in Britain. These were the years when "Eurocommunism" was believed to be on the march. In France, it seemed likely in 1976–78 that the coalition of Socialists and Communists, in which the latter were still perceived as the stronger partner, would win the forthcoming parliamentary elections. In Italy, the "historic compromise" was supposed to foreshadow the entrance of the PCI into the government. A new American president kept insisting that his highest priority was reduction of the threat of nuclear war anywhere in the world.

The bloom, in short, was not yet off *détente*. It must have seemed to the Soviet Union that the prevailing mood stood a good chance of preventing any countering response to its arms buildup in the European theater. In the early 1960s, Khrushchev had crudely threatened Western Europe with a rain of nuclear missiles (which, it later turned out, he did not possess) unless he got his way over Berlin and the status of East Germany. His bluff failed, but by the late '70s Soviet military strength was vastly greater, and the stakes were correspondingly higher: the disintegration of NATO and a "Finlandized" Europe from Poland to Portugal. The purpose of the SS–20s was to achieve what the *Economist* calls "usable nuclear superiority," not in order to fight a war but to separate Europe from America and frighten it into acquiescence in future crises and conflicts.

During the four years since 1979, there have been elections that resulted in new parties or party coalitions winning office in all of the leading nations of the Western alliance. In the past year alone, elections in which the new missiles were a prominent issue took place in the three major NATO nations scheduled to receive them. In all three, the party or parties favoring deployment won decisive victories. In France, Mitterrand's Socialist government has vigorously supported the NATO decision and strengthened the French independent nuclear deterrent. No significant pacifist-neutralist movement has emerged there, in striking contrast to Britain and West Germany where since being voted out of office the major parties of the left have embraced the antinuclear and, in Britain, the anti-NATO cause. The new Italian government headed by a Socialist and the Socialists recently elected in Spain and Portugal, however, have approved of the NATO decision.

Support for the decision by Western governments and electorates has, of course, been powerfully influenced by Soviet actions since 1979: the invasion of Afghanistan, the backing and probable dictation of the army coup suppressing Solidarity in Poland, hints of Soviet involvement in the assassination attempt on the Pope, and the impact of the shooting-down of the Korean airliner last summer. If Messrs. Carter, Schmidt, Callaghan, and Giscard had stayed in office, they would unquestionably have followed the same policy on the missiles as their successors, as would any of the numerous prime ministers of Italy before Craxi.

The election of a conservative American president, reminiscent of Rip Van Winkle in his predilection for the kind of anti-Soviet rhetoric that had been fairly routine 20 years earlier, undoubtedly gave an enormous boost to European anti-American and pacifist sentiment as well as to the antinuclear movement in the United States. The Reagan administration's loose words, combined with its obvious initial preference for more arms over serious arms-control negotiations, inspired huge disarmament rallies on both sides of the Atlantic. Had it not been for the popular apprehensions aroused by the new Administration, British Labour and the German SPD might not have identified themselves so closely with their national pacifist-neutralist movements. At the same time, protesters have remained blind or indifferent to the evidence that in "mobilizing" supporters and obtaining wide television coverage they also manage to repel millions of voting citizens with no unshakable enthusiasm for the protested policies.

Under such circumstances, failure to act on the NATO decision would have cast a shadow on democratic government itself. Suppose that public demonstrations and protest marches had led the newly elected governments to reverse themselves and postpone even temporarily deployment of the missiles, or, as demanded by the Greens in West Germany, to hold plebiscites that returned majorities for such a course. Would not this have revealed extraordinary political weakness and instability? The question, of course, is most ominously relevant to West Germany where forecasts of a "hot autumn" of frenzied resistance to deployment of the missiles were rife despite the March '83 election results, with observers predicting, gloomily or half-wishfully, a possible "constitutional crisis" posing threats to civil liberties and public order. In the end, nothing of the kind materialized.

NATO HAS BEEN REAFFIRMED and the military balance of power partially restored. Nevertheless, many uncertainties remain. Some commentators,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not all of them critics of the NATO decision trying to launch a self-fulfilling prophecy, have predicted that the missile deployment will turn out to have been a pyrrhic victory, basing this conclusion largely on the defection of the German Social Democrats from the 20-year party consensus on foreign policy. Perhaps they will prove to be right, but it is also possible that the British Labour party already has held up a mirror to the SPD of its own future in falling below the 30 percent mark, the proportion of the popular vote that European socialist parties have in the past found it hard to surpass—including the SPD in the 1950s before it abandoned the nationalist, anti-NATO line it followed under Kurt Schumacher. Certainly, nothing has happened to make German reunification, once again given high priority by opponents of the NATO decision, more achievable than in the past. Indeed, the situation in Poland makes it even less credible that the Soviet Union would consider an "Austrian solution" for an enlarged, free and vigorous Germany whose neutrality in spirit could hardly be guaranteed by treaty provisions.

Yet doubts about the continuing rationale for NATO's existence have by no means been overcome. The double decision was a response not only to the Soviet SS–20s but also to the long-standing problem of "coupling" European defense to the American nuclear arsenal once the Soviet Union achieved overall nuclear parity with the United States. The refusal of Europe to build up even its conventional armed forces persists and is reaffirmed by the new SPD line. The result may yet be a more potent rebirth of "Mansfieldism" in the United States.

Americans of left-liberal values should cherish no illusions that a United States separated from Europe would retreat into an isolationist concern with butter over guns rather than pursuing a more aggressive unilateral policy of resisting the Soviet Union that would not be confined to this hemisphere. Nor, in Germany, are the Greens and the now-dominant anti-NATO wing of the SPD likely to be the ultimate beneficiaries of such a future. The cunning of history may have cast them in the role of preparing the ground for a Germany in control of its own nuclear weapons, or for a revived European defense community including France and supplanting NATO. But for the moment, any new initiatives will have to come from Moscow. □

PRAXIS
INTERNATIONAL

Editors: Richard J. Bernstein and Mihailo Marković
Volume 4 no. 1 April 1984

Habermas on Modernity and Post-Modernity
Martin Jay, *Habermas and Modernism*
Joel Whitebook, *Reason and Happiness: Some Psychoanalytic Themes in Critical Theory*
Richard Rorty, *Habermas and Lyotard on Post-Modernity*
Marxism and Rights
Drucilla Cornell, *Should a Marxist Believe in Rights?*
William McBride, *Rights and the Marxian Tradition*

Published quarterly: April, July, October and January
Subscriptions to Volume 4 (1984/85)
Individuals: £13.95 (UK); £16.75 (Overseas); $33.50 (US); $40.50 (Canada)
Institutions: £38.00 (UK) £46.50 (Overseas); $85.00; $104.50 (Canada)

Please send orders, with payment, to: Sue Dommett, Journals Department,
Basil Blackwell, 108 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1JF, England.

Basil Blackwell · Oxford · England

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Andrei Sinyavsky

Dissent as a Personal Experience

My experience of dissent is extremely individual, even though, like any personal experience, it reflects in some way broader, more general, and more ramified developments, and not only the events of my own life. I have never belonged to any dissident movement or dissident community, and my heterodoxy has manifested itself not in public activity but exclusively in my writing; moreover, in a kind of writing that initially was esoteric, stylistically obscure for the general public, and not meant to evoke any openly political resonance.

The first period of my dissent as a writer takes up approximately ten years, from 1955 to my arrest. In those days I sent manuscripts abroad through secret channels and, hiding my real name, I published in the West under the pseudonym Abram Tertz. I was wanted as a criminal: this I knew, and I understood that I would be caught sooner or later, for as the saying goes, "Crime does not pay."

As a result the process of writing itself assumed the nature of a rather thrilling detective story, although I do not write detective fiction and dislike it, and personally I do not care for the adventuresome. I just did not see any other way for my literary work to be published than this slippery path, which was condemned by the state, and was similar to a dangerous game of chance in which it was necessary to stake everything, one's existence, one's human interests, and one's personal attachments on a single card. There was simply no other way. It was necessary to choose, in one's own mind, between one's existence as a human being and one's existence as a writer. The more so since the destiny of writers in the Soviet Union shows that literature is a risky and at times fatal path, and under Soviet conditions the writer who combines literature with his well-being often stops being a real writer.

From the very beginning of my literary career there was, whether I liked it or not, a kind of split personality, which still has not been obliterated. This is a split between the authorial persona Abram Tertz and my human self (as well as my scholarly likeness), Andrei Sinyavsky. As a man I prefer a quiet, peaceful, and secluded life, and I am quite an ordinary person. Accordingly, people are usually nice and well-meaning to me as a human individual. The same may be said about my research and teaching activities, which even today run parallel to my work as a writer. To be sure there have also been various inconveniences in this regard—in connection, for example, with my study of the poetry of Pasternak—but, after all, those are trifles.

On the whole my career as a scholar and a literary critic has developed successfully enough. And very likely I would still be a perfectly happy member of the Soviet Academy of Science and a prosperous literary critic of the liberal direction, if it were not for my dark literary double by the name of Abram Tertz. This person is, in contrast to Andrei Sinyavsky, inclined to go on forbidden paths and to take risky steps of different kinds, which has brought a great amount of trouble upon him and, accordingly, upon me. I think, however, that this "split personality" is not a ques-

---

This essay is part of the proceedings of "The Meaning of Dissent: An International Scholars' Conference," originally published in the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, No. 31 (1982); copyright © 1983 by the Comparative Literature Program, Indiana University. The proceedings also included essays by Matei Calinescu, J. Michael Holquist, Irving Howe, and Jon Thiem.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion of my moral psychology, but rather a problem of the artistic style employed by Abram Tertz—an ironic, *outré* style, with elements of the fantastic and the grotesque.

To write as is customary or as is ordered is simply of no interest to me. Supposing I were asked to describe ordinary life in an ordinary realistic manner, I would refrain from writing at all. Inasmuch as politics and the social structure are not my discipline, it can be said jokingly that my disagreements with the Soviet government were basically aesthetic. As a result, Abram Tertz is a dissident primarily by virtue of his stylistic qualities. But he is an impudent, incorrigible dissident, who provokes indignation and aversion in a conservative and conformist society.

Here it is fitting to deviate a bit and point out that any real literature in modern times is most often a transgression of the rules "*du bon ton.*" By its nature literature is heterodoxy (in the broader sense of the word) with regard to the prevailing view of things. Any writer is a heterodox element within a society of people who think in an orthodox manner or, in any event, think alike. Any writer is an outcast, a degenerate, a not fully legitimate person in the world, because he thinks and writes in opposition to the opinion of the majority—at least if he writes in defiance of the existing style and the already determined, accepted course in literature.

In principle the writer should probably be killed—if for no other reason than because, when all people live like real people, he writes. Writing itself is heterodoxy in relation to life. In Russia one of the jailers admitted to me in a moment of intimacy, "I would put all writers without exception and independent of their greatness—Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky—into one big madhouse, because writers only disturb the normal development of life." I think that this man is somehow right in his own way. He is right in that the writer, by the mere fact of his existence, introduces a kind of anxiety into the social system.

This is particularly the case in a standardized society, which lives and thinks according to state orders. In such a society the writer is a criminal, a more dangerous criminal than a thief or a murderer. In prison I was told with regard to my work, "It would have been better had you killed somebody!" Yet I had not written anything terrible in these works, and had not called for the overthrow of the Soviet government. It was sufficient that you think differently in some way, that you compose words in your own way and thereby enter into contradiction with the general official style, and with the official jargon, which determines everything. For such authors, as for dissidents in general, there exists a special juridical term in the Soviet Union: "especially dangerous state criminals." I personally fell into this category, and I hope to remain to the end of my days, in the eyes of Soviet society, an "especially dangerous state criminal."

However, I was not always such a bad fellow. My childhood and adolescence, in the 1930s, were spent in a wholesome Soviet atmosphere, in a normal Soviet family. My father was admittedly no Bolshevik. He had been a left Social Revolutionary, and after renouncing the aristocratic milieu by 1909 he had already joined the revolution. He took an extremely loyal position toward the Bolshevik government, no matter how they persecuted him for his former revolutionary activities.

Accordingly, I was raised in the best traditions of the Russian Revolution, or more precisely, in the traditions of revolutionary idealism, which, by the way, I do not by any means regret. I do not regret it because in my childhood I adopted from my father the notion that one should not live in accordance with narrow, egotistic, "bourgeois" interests, and that it is necessary to see some higher meaning in life. Subsequently, art became this "higher meaning" for me. When I was fifteen, on the eve of the war, I was an enthusiastic Communist-Marxist, for whom there was nothing finer than the world revolution and the future universal brotherhood.

Let me remark in passing that to the extent that we are talking about dissent as a concrete historical phenomenon, this is a very typical biography for Soviet dissidents in general. Most of the time, dissidents were formerly very high-minded Soviet individuals, people with strong convictions, with principles, and with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revolutionary ideals. On the whole, dissidents are the product of the Soviet society of the post-Stalin era, and not some alien elements in this society nor remnants of some old, shattered opposition.

In all periods of Soviet history there have been enemies of the Soviet government—people who have not been satisfied with it or who have suffered from it; people who have criticized it, but who nevertheless cannot be called dissidents. Nor can we call, for instance, Pasternak, Mandelstam, or Akhmatova dissidents although they were heretics in Soviet literature. Through their heterodoxy they anticipated dissent; they supported and still support this later development. But one cannot call them dissidents for the simple reason that their roots go back to bygone, prerevolutionary traditions of Russian culture.

Dissidents, on the other hand, are a totally new phenomenon, which grew directly from the soil of Soviet reality. They are the people who were raised in Soviet society, who are children of the Soviet system, and who came into conflict with the ideology and the psychology of their fathers. And this, it seems to me, partly explains the interest of the contemporary West in the problems of Soviet dissent, because the dissidents represent a view of Soviet society from within. One cannot accuse the dissidents of being an alien class, nor of not accepting the Revolution, like those people who lost out in it. This is not a political opposition struggling for power. It is characteristic that the political accent of the dissident movement is generally low-key, while intellectual and moral questions come to the fore. This distinguishes the dissidents from the Russian revolutionaries of the past, and if they bring about some "revolution"—let us provisionally call it by that term—then it will be in the form of a reevaluation of values, which is the starting point for dissent.

Within each dissident this process of reevaluation takes its individual course under the influence of one or another of the contradictions in daily life. Each dissident encounters his or her own stumbling block, which serves as the catalyst of critical thought. For many dissidents this stumbling block, as we know, was the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, not only because their eyes were opened to the enormous crimes of the past, but also because, after having revealed to them some of these crimes, the Twentieth Party Congress and all of the subsequent Soviet ideology did not and could not give any sort of serious, historical explanation for these events. And although the regime has become more moderate since Stalin, this has not led to a more liberal and more democratic state system, which would provide some guarantee of human rights and human liberty. In the aftermath of the Twentieth Party Congress, the Soviet people were simply told, as before, to trust the party and the state in everything.

In the recent past, however, this faith has cost too much and has led us too far astray. As a consequence each dissident's ideological or childish faith in the justice of communism was replaced by individual reason and the voice of one's conscience. Thus the dissident movement is, in my opinion, primarily an intellectual movement; it is a process of independent and unintimidated thinking. At the same time these intellectual or spiritual aspirations are correlated to a feeling of moral responsibility, which is bestowed upon a man and forces him to think, speak, and write independently without regard for the norms and prescriptions of the state.

I personally experienced this normative process of dissent a little bit differently. My period of reevaluating values and forming individual opinions was during the late 1940s and early '50s. That period of late, mature, and rampant Stalinism after the war coincided with the years of my studies, when I began to study the humanities at Moscow University, and the main stumbling blocks, which led to the collapse of revolutionary ideals, were problems of literature and art, which arose with particular poignancy in those days. After all, this was exactly the time when the frightful purges were carried out in the Soviet cultural world. To my misfortune, I loved modernism in art and everything that, as a result of the purges, was subject to destruction. I saw the purges as the death of culture and the end of any original thought in Russia.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the internal conflict between politics and art I opted for art and rejected politics. At the same time I started to look closely at the nature of the Soviet state in general, in the light of the devastation that was visited on life and culture. Consequently I was exhilarated at Stalin's death. Having attempted to write "something original and artistic," I understood in advance that there would not be and could not be any place for it in Soviet literature. I never tried nor even so much as dreamed of publishing it in my own country; so I simply sent the manuscripts abroad. This was nothing less than dropping out from the prevailing literary system and the literary environment. Sending works to the West was, however, the best means of "preserving the text" and did not represent a political action or a form of protest.

I did not therefore consider myself guilty of a political crime, when they arrested me and when the second period of my career as a writer began. Now this was a natural form of behavior, and not a result of cunning on my part. Generally, a man who is thrown into prison should behave naturally—this is the only thing that helps. It is natural for the writer to affirm that literature neither is nor can serve the purpose of political agitation and propaganda, as is maintained by the Soviet government—which, by the way, conducts political agitation freely and incompetently in the West.

In this manner my friend Yuli Daniel and I managed to take the position of "pleading not guilty" despite the pressure of the court and the KGB. This rather strong pressure is exerted on your person and your family, and our denial of guilt played a specific role in the development of the dissident or, as it is called, the democratic movement, although we were not directly associated with this movement, but rather acted on our own.

The problem was that earlier on in all public political trials in the Soviet Union, the "criminals" (in quotation marks and without quotation marks) confessed their guilt, repented, and publicly abased themselves before the Soviet court. Political justice in the Soviet Union was based on it. Of course, there had previously also been some people who repented and considered themselves not guilty, but no one ever heard about it. Outwardly everything went well: "the enemies of the people" confessed to being "enemies of the people" and asked for the chance to be good, honest Soviet citizens, or, even worse, not to be shot, so that they could improve, and by atoning for their crimes against the fatherland become good, honest Soviet citizens. For the state this meant reducing the people to a common denominator, to a "moral-political unity of the Soviet people and the party."

We, the dissidents, succeeded in breaking with this tradition. We succeeded in remaining ourselves and outside the Soviet "unity." In our court case (Yuli Daniel's and mine), this was made public, and it received support within the country and abroad, in the West, through "public opinion." All this happened without our willing it. Being in prison and being on trial, we did not presume that another process was beginning around our prosecution. We were isolated and could not imagine that it would lead to a chain reaction. We were simply writers and persisted in our own course.

At this point it is appropriate to remember that a dissident (I am using the expression now in its most general and broadest meaning) is not only a man who disagrees with the system and has the courage to express himself: he is

---

Try-to-Beat-This Dept.

One might state, in language that William O'Neill, Norman Podhoretz, Martin Peretz, and even Ronald Radosh might understand, that there has never been such a thing as "Stalinism." The Trotskyists developed the term as a pathetic attempt to identify their rejection by the Communist movement with mere factional squabbles.

Subsequently, the term was employed by the whole claque of red-baiters in a giant guilt-by-association ritual, blaming the entire Communist movement for every injustice, real or imagined, associated with Stalin. Indeed, the concept, as used by anti-Communists, is no more than a convenient ideological club with which to beat their political opponents, divorced from any historical or empirical evidence.

—Norman Markowitz, "The New Cold-War 'Scholarship,'" *Political Affairs* (magazine of the American Communist party), October 1983. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also a man who does not consider himself guilty. This is, of course, a matter of personal choice, and nobody may impose upon anyone any "rules of behavior" before Soviet justice. This is a problem to be resolved by each individual. But the concept of the "dissident" presupposes a specific kind of moral resistance or force of conscience, which does not allow him to repent and turn into an ordinary Soviet citizen who speaks at the bidding of the state all his life. There are those who do not repent their words and their deeds, are consequently sent to labor camps, and remain dissidents. There are others who retract their dissent, repudiate themselves, get free and become again "honest Soviet citizens." The warrant of dissidence is prison.

I now turn to the third and last period of my experience as a dissident—the period from my emigration up to the present. I would like to dwell for a while on this point, since it is particularly complicated and, in my opinion, dramatic. I will hardly touch upon the West itself, because I am interested in the dissident emigré environment and its press, in which I had occasion to get involved deeply enough to gain an exceedingly unsettling experience.

What has recently been going on with the dissidents who have come to the West should, in my opinion, be designated by the expression "dissident NEP." I am using this expression not as a scientific term but rather as an image, an analogy to that colorful period of Soviet history that began in the 1920s, after the Civil War, and continued for about five to seven years. In those days the government granted the country the so-called economic breather, with the purpose of adjusting an economy devastated by war and revolution. As we know, this was a comparatively peaceful and happy period, allowing the people to breathe relatively freely and grow fat a bit. Simultaneously, this was the time of crushing defeat for all opposition and the beginning of the powerful Stalinist consolidation. It was the time when the revolution degenerated into its opposite, a conservative, petty-bourgeois/bureaucratic system.

It is amazing that during the years of NEP (New Economic Policy), many heroes of the Revolution and the Civil War turned out to be cowards, opportunists, submissive executors of the new political system, veritable philistines and conformists. Does that mean that they had not been real heroes in the recent past? No, they were heroes, without any doubt; they had faced death and feared nothing. But the political climate had changed and they had entered a different environment, which demanded different human qualities. And yet it was also as if they had come into their own; they were the very medium of the triumphant revolution. And so if they had not fallen in battle, the heroes of yesterday turned into mediocre bureaucrats.

Now let us transfer some characteristics of NEP to our dissident experience. Having come to the West, we find ourselves not only in a different society but also in a different historical climate, at a different stage of its development. This is a peaceful and comparatively happy period in our personal histories. We have only to endure the test of prosperity, as well as the test of democracy and freedom, of which we had dreamed. As dissidents we are threatened by nothing except personal decadence. After all, it is very easy to be a dissident in the West (that is, a dissident with regard to the Soviet system). What threatened us with prison in the Soviet Union promises us here, with a certain effort, prestige and material prosperity.

Only the idea of "dissidence" itself fades somehow over here and loses its heroic, romantic, and moral aura. We essentially do not resist anything and risk nothing, but only shake our fists in the air in the belief that we are carrying on a battle for human rights. It is clear that we sincerely wish to help, and at times we actually do help those who are persecuted in the Soviet Union. But this has to be done: one has to think of those who are in prison over there. Only on our part (and this is worth remembering) all this is no longer a struggle, nor a sacrifice, nor an achievement; it is charity and philanthropy. It can even be an income, a living, and at times, unfortunately, a profitable enterprise. It is this last circumstance that sometimes adds a not altogether noble touch to the dissident cause in the West.

Everybody, of course, needs money, and if a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dissident has no other specialty, he is forced to earn his living on this well-trodden path. Money is also necessary to publish books and journals, to organize conferences, and so on. And all these are useful and absolutely necessary things in Russia as well as in the West. As everyone already knows, however, money not only makes it possible to do good and permits one to live independently but, as it happens, it also corrupts and enslaves. And dissidents cannot escape this universal human law.

I do not mention any names, because it is not a question of names but of trends. And the trend, unfortunately, shows that there are cases when the dissident who comes to the West loses his distinguishing feature, his independence and his courage of mind, and enters the service of some dissident-emigré corporation, or the service of some dissident ideological boss. And he no longer speaks his mind but rather what is demanded of him. His adaptation is justified with the words, "You cannot survive here otherwise!" Moreover, this may be said by someone who only yesterday risked his life for his convictions.

And what are we to make of this? Was it the case that in the Soviet Union, in prison, he was spiritually free and could live in his own way, different from the majority, and without yielding to any sort of pressure or bribery? And is it the case that here, in an environment of freedom, he adapts himself to the situation, because here, as it suddenly turns out, "you cannot survive otherwise"? Is freedom psychologically more dangerous for him, the dissident, than prison? Can it be that, given freedom, we become slaves? Or was Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor right when he said that people do not love freedom but fear it, and seek some support in life, in the form of bread, authority, and miracle? That people seek someone to worship and, "in order to do it surely together," look for a "community of worship" of some authority, to which they surrender their freedom? We are, however, not concerned here with the problems of human history and psychology in general but with a concrete phenomenon: the dissident movement. So with reference to dissidents now in the West, the greatest danger of opportunism and conformism arises, as it seems to me, from the need for a general, communal worship of something or somebody.

Here it is necessary to take the specific character of emigré life into account. When coming to the West, we become very lonely, and we suffer from our loneliness. This affects us Russians in particular, for we are used to closer, more amicable contacts than we can notice in the West. Naturally, we look for *our* own people, for *our* environment, and we find it in the form of the dissident-emigré association. We easily make concessions to this environment and its authorities, insofar as we fear losing it; and the range of choices within the groups is extraordinarily limited. The community of thought that arises in this environment, the narrowness of the environment and its seclusion, and at times its conservatism and subordination to authority, sometimes even the emigré's material dependence on this authority and this environment—all these create the fertile soil to foster conformity.

We ourselves do not always realize how we turn from dissidents into conformists. After all, we do not commit treason, we do not leave one camp for the other. We only adjust ourselves subtly. But in exactly that way, the heroes of the Revolution did not realize their degeneration during the NEP period. After all they did not betray the ideals of communism. The revolutionaries only turned into obedient party officials. This is why I am afraid that in our emigration, under the warm wings of the democratic West, we reproduce the archetype of the Soviet system without wishing it or being aware of it—only with a different, anti-Soviet valence. There is another essential difference: we do not have our police and we do not have those prisons. But there is already a censorship in its own right, and there are also informers. It is only that the Western police somehow do not accept our reports. Oh yes, we forgot: after all, this is a democracy!

An outside observer interested in our problems does not always understand why and about what Soviet dissidents who have emigrated to the West argue so fervently among themselves. They do not understand why there is no agreement on opinions: after all, all of us

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are dissidents. I personally think that there is more agreement among us than is necessary. There is even an excess of agreement, to the detriment of our dissent. After all, the dissidents are by nature not a political party and do not even share an ideology. The repudiation of Soviet ideology presumes not only different thinking with regard to this ideology, but also diversity of thought within heterodoxy. If we are heretics, then there should be many heresies. This is, in my view, the value of dissent, which in its ideal form is not the nucleus of a new church or of a new, unified, anti-Soviet state, but rather a pluralistic community, even if only on paper.

I said before that the Soviet dissidents are by their nature an intellectual, spiritual, and moral opposition. The question is: opposition against what? Not simply against the Soviet system in general, but also opposition against the uniformity of ideas and their paralysis in Soviet society. And if we want a free Russian idea, a free Russian word and culture to develop, we need diversity of thought. This is the most important precondition for the development of Russian culture. Why should diversity of thought be possible in the West, yet not for us dissidents? We are, after all, like anyone else, equipped with the rudiments of reason and a sense of justice.

Apart from this, there has recently been a clear split within the dissident movement, particularly on emigré soil. It is a split into two wings or directions; the first can provisionally be called the "authoritarian-nationalist" wing, and the second the "liberal-democratic" wing. By its nature, dissent is liberal and democratic, and that is the way it started. Therefore the terms "Soviet dissidents" or "democratic movement" were and remain synonymous. The "national-authoritarian" wing appeared later and entered, as it seems to me, into a conflict with the main premises of the movement. It is understandable that with the split now in process, serious and fundamental disagreements flare up. They form the basis of our quarrels.

I belong to the liberal-democratic wing—not because I believe in the imminent victory of freedom and democracy in Russia. On the contrary, I categorically do not believe in such a victory. At any rate, I do not see such prospects in the near, foreseeable future. But under the circumstances of Soviet despotism, it is correct for a Russian intellectual—in my opinion—to be a liberal and a democrat, and not to propose some other new kind of despotism. Let us assume that democracy as a social and government system has no future in Russia. All the same, it is our vocation to remain proponents of freedom, because freedom, like some other "useless" concept—such as, for instance, art, goodness, or human thought—is an end in itself and does not depend on the historical or political trend.

This is why I cannot agree with those dissidents who propose to exchange communism with another variety of despotism under the banner of nationalism and religion, even though such changes are probably historically feasible. Although I personally belong to the Russian Orthodox church and like the old Russian culture fully as much as many writers and thinkers of the Slavophile circle, with regard to contemporary Russian nationalism I am extremely suspicious of the idealization of the state order and the social customs of a Russia of the past. I am against the mixture of spiritual and material values, or of religious and political ones.

Let us say that many contemporary Russophiles tend to criticize the West for the formalized way of life, for the fact that here judicial and rationalistic categories of "law" and "justice" dominate, when the ideas of Christian "love" and "goodness" were indigenous to Russia from the very beginning. And " 'goodness' is higher than 'law.' " Yes, I agree. Divine goodness and love are higher and greater than all human laws made on earth. But this theory seems to me dangerous and insulting in reference to a government system—dangerous for the individual, and insulting to religion. After all it is not God, not Christ, who in reality rules a despotic state but the czar or the leader who, unfortunately, even if it is an orthodox czar, frequently does not resemble God but rather the Devil. Of course, this czar has the opportunity to show "goodness" in circumvention of "law." But this "goodness" itself, in order to be shown, requires unbelievable, uncontrollable, and autocratic power. And in practice such power does not turn into love or goodness, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into executions. More precisely: many, many executions, and a little bit of goodness. So, in my view, the formalized and rationalistic "law" is better than czarist "goodness."

Russian dissidents who have come to the West are sometimes afraid of democracy here. They think that the West will gradually disintegrate under the pressure of the monolithic, totalitarian system of the Soviet Union. They advise the West to turn to more authoritarian principles. And, correspondingly, they want the Russia of the future not to be a democracy but a more solid authoritarian-theocratic state. In the end, the people who were, so it seems, saved from death by Western democracy now would like to restrict it. Hence the moralistic and didactic pronouncements to the West on the part of some Soviet dissidents, who see this West for the first time and know it badly.

We should probably be more modest and, by transmitting our distressing experience to the West, be careful to teach the West how to live and build its fundamental, Western society. We have already built our society in the form of a Communist state, from which we do not know where to turn. The new Russian nationalists object to this argument by claiming that all our Russian misfortunes have come from the West. Marxism came from the West. From the West came liberalism, undermining the autocratical-patriarchal foundation of Russia. All foreigners (Poles, Jews, Latvians, Hungarians) who brought about the October Revolution were Western intruders. Yet all this is but a search for a "scapegoat" somewhere from without. It is not we who are guilty but someone alien (the West, a world conspiracy, the Jews, and so on). In essence, this means casting off one's own sins and omissions. We are actually the good ones, we are clean, we are most fortunate, because we are Russians. And it is the "Devil" who interfered in our history.

What I am saying here is a sacrilege from the nationalists' point of view. For similar reasons, Russian nationalists call Russian liberals (and me, specifically) *Russophobes*. Like the decadent, liberal atheist in the West, we—in league with the Communists—hate the Russian people and Russia. It is difficult to defend oneself against such an accusation. After all, should one shout loudly that one loves Russia? That would be ridiculous. As far as I have observed, there are not that many Russophobes in the West. The converse, "Russophile" position would betray a lack of respect for the Russian people. If Russia could be conquered by a bunch of foreigners, how could this great nation be so worthy? And if Russia is incompatible with democracy, would that not mean that, by this interpretation, the people itself is inclined to slavery? By the way, this fear of democracy, applied to the Russian people, has had bitter antecedents in our history. For the longest time the "Russian patriots" were afraid to abolish serfdom in Russia. Their concern: how could one grant freedom to a Russian peasant? After all, without the landowner's supervision he would immediately stop working and get drunk!

Such are our quarrels in the broadest and crassest outlines. These arguments are useful for the discovery of our different views on the matter, but in practice they are rather utopian. The Soviet system is extremely solid and does not promise any freedom (including freedom for the founding of an orthodox theocracy or autocracy). But we are always arguing: Do we need freedom? And we bring the needle of the compass, as has long been our custom, to the side of despotism. A very sad portent.

How odd it is that in our Western environment the authoritarian-nationalist wing enjoys greater success and influence than the democratic one. This is so because, owing to its psychological makeup, the authoritarian direction is more party-oriented, more disciplined, more single-minded, and more obedient to the authority of the "leader" than the democrats, who lean by nature toward tolerance, pluralism, and diversity of thought. Moreover, nationalism and the proponents of the authoritarian system are supported by the largest part of the old emigrés, who make up the majority of the Russian public, and who are, so to speak, the Russian soil in the West. They support the authoritarian-nationalist wing by virtue of their inveterate, monarchist conservatism. For the old emigrés, prerevolutionary Russia is an in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

disputable ideal to which contemporary Russia —occupied by the Bolsheviks—dreams of returning. In Paris a nice elderly lady asked me, after she found out that I had recently come from Moscow, whether I had met *ours* there. "Which ours?" I asked timidly. She replied, "The Whites!" At this level of understanding the democratic dissidents who come to the West are something like "Soviet devils," who are specially sent here by the Bolsheviks, in order to disarm the last bulwark of the Fatherland.

It is interesting, however, that even Western circles sometimes tend to support the Russian nationalists and authoritarian representatives, even though the democratic dissidents are psychologically much closer to them. The logic here is as follows: freedom and democracy are good for the West, but for Russia something simpler and more reactionary is required—as for savages. Let me pose a purely rhetorical question: has democratic America not at times supported extremely reactionary, authoritarian, and totalitarian regimes in developing countries, hoping thereby to save these countries from the Communist infection? And has it not lost with this policy? Yet I am not concerned with American politics, which I understand poorly, but with Russian culture. It is this difference of interests that keeps us sometimes from coming to a mutual understanding.

As an illustration I want to tell you of a private conversation I recently had with a very clever and perceptive Western Sovietologist. According to his personal convictions and tastes he is a liberal and a democrat, but politically he counts on Russian authoritarianism and nationalism. As a sophisticated man he is shocked by the rudeness of this direction, and, if he were Russian, he would never become associated with it. But to him it seems a movement with more of a future and greater advantage to the West than that of the Russian democrats. I asked him, "Aren't you afraid that in the end, in succession to the Soviet system, or more likely, in the form of some kind of alliance with it, outright fascism will triumph in Russia?" It turns out that this does not upset him in any way. He regards Russian fascism as a realistic alternative to Soviet communism and hopes that Russian fascism may save the West from communism through its concern with nationalism.

I, personally, am not so optimistic; in my opinion, the West should save itself from communism by its own efforts, and not with the help of someone's fascism. But the greatest contradiction again consists in the fact that freedom is a necessity for Russian culture, whereas for my Western interlocutor, Russian culture is of minor importance and not essential at all. To him it is important to save the world from a catastrophe. I personally do not undertake such great tasks as saving the world. My profession is narrower: I am a writer.

In conclusion, I only want to confirm my "dissent." Under an avalanche of abuse, this is easy. As an emigré I began to understand that I am not an enemy of the Soviet government only, but generally: I am an enemy—an enemy as such—metaphysically, in principle. Not that I was someone's friend first and then became his enemy. I am not anyone's friend, but only an enemy.

The West, of course, only smiles gleefully at these "Russian specimens": exotics. After all, the West does not read Russian newspapers on this or that side of the ocean. But I do read them, and I can see. And this is my conclusion: there, in the Soviet Union, I was an "agent of Imperialism"; here, in exile, I am an "agent of Moscow."

Meanwhile I have not changed my position, but have said the same thing: art is greater than reality. A threatening retribution is following me from various corners—for one and the same kind of books, for one and the same kind of statements, for one and the same style, for one and the same crime.

Psychologically, this somewhat resembles the sort of nightmare in one's sleep that does not come to an end. You know what happens in a dream: you seem to wake up, but only to find yourself in an even more intense continuation of your dream. Wherever you turn, you are an enemy of the people. No, even worse, even more horrible: you are Dante, who killed Pushkin; and you also killed Gogol. You hate culture. You hate "everything Russian" (earlier, in the first dream, it could be heard: "You hate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

everything Soviet," and incidentally, that too meant that you hate everything Russian). You hate your own mother, even your deceased mother. You are anti-Semitic. You are a misanthrope. You are a Judas who betrayed Christ in the form of the new, Communist, national-religious resurrection of Russia. I reason to myself that despite all deficiencies, I am still not the Antichrist. But what I think does not matter. It is all subjective. Objectively, that is, socially and publicly, I am the enemy of everything that is fine in the world. What is more—of everything that is good, everything that is human. What a horror!

I ask myself, how could I ever have sunk so low? After all, I was a nice boy at some point, like all people. But apparently society knows better than I what sort of man I am. After Soviet justice, if you will, there is emigré justice—and the same evidence. Of course, they do not throw you into a concentration camp. But a camp is not the most frightful thing in the world. There it is even pleasant compared to emigration, where they say that you have not been in any camp at all, but that you are sent "on an assignment" to destroy Russian culture.

I am now interested in one question: Why did Soviet and anti-Soviet, emigré justice agree (agree literally) in their accusations of me, a Russian dissident? Most likely, because both of these organs of justice are just and therefore so similar to each other. Who needs freedom? Freedom is a danger. Freedom is irresponsibility before the authoritarian collective. Watch out for it—freedom!

But finally you awake in the morning after all these dreams and you smile ironically at yourself: didn't you wish that? Yes, all that is true. Freedom! Writing—this is freedom.

University of Paris

Translated from the Russian by MARIA-REGINA KECHT □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Barbara Ehrenreich and Frances Fox Piven

The Feminization of Poverty

When the "Family-Wage System" Breaks Down

Despite the widespread misperception that women are achieving economic equality, their economic status has deteriorated sharply since the late 1960s. Today women—and children—are the primary beneficiaries of social welfare programs for the poor. Between the mid-'60s and mid-'70s, the number of poor adult males declined, while the number of the poor in households headed by women swelled by 100,000 a year. By 1980, America's poor were predominantly female; two out of three adults whose incomes fell below the official federal poverty line were women, and more than half the families who were poor were headed by women. This trend prompted the National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity (since then disbanded by the Reagan administration) to observe that "All other things being equal, if the proportion of poor in female-headed households were to continue to increase at the same rate as it did from 1967 to 1978, the poverty population would be composed solely of women and their children before the year 2000." Poverty in the United States has always been disproportionately concentrated among minorities, but the convergence of gender and class is unprecedented in American history.

The causes for the feminization of poverty are rooted in profound changes in American society. Like most industrialized capitalist countries, we have long presumed a "family-wage" system. The achievement of a family wage for men, meaning earnings sufficient to support a wife and children, was an important victory of the late 19th- and early 20th-century labor struggles. But this achievement by unionized male workers helped to thwart women's aspirations for higher wages, particularly in typically female occupations. Of course, not all men and certainly not all black men earned enough to support families, nor were all women supported by men. Nevertheless, the assumption that women entered the work force only as secondary workers reinforced the segregation of women into low-paying occupations and legitimized systematic wage discrimination against women. For those women who could depend on the earnings of a male breadwinner, however, the system did offer economic security, if not the dignity of economic independence.

In the course of only two decades, the family-wage system has ceased to provide economic security for women and their children. Increasingly, women must depend on their own earnings, and even when they do not, they can't

From the forthcoming book *Alternatives: Proposals for America from the Democratic Left*, edited by Irving Howe. Copyright © 1984 by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc. To be published by Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

count as they once did on the earnings of men. Yet the assumption of the family-wage system remains firmly embedded in a wage structure that offers women, hour for hour, only 59 percent of the average male wage. What is usually called "the breakdown of the family" occurred without equalizing changes in the labor market, and this accounts for the disproportionate impoverishment of women.

For many women, poverty begins when their marriage ends. Half of the marriages in the United States now end in divorce, and in 80 percent of these divorces the children remain with their mothers. Child-support payments are a negligible source of income for most of these families. Forty percent of divorced fathers contribute nothing, and those who do contribute pay on the average less than $2,100 a year. Many other women are poor before they become mothers and, for them, having the sole responsibility for children is only another barrier to achieving economic self-sufficiency in the labor market.

Women who both raise and support their children need, of course, to earn a "family wage," just as many married women also need to earn a substantial portion of their families' income.

Yet the average annual income for working women now is $11,000 a year, and less than $8,000 for black single mothers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a family of four now requires $25,000 a year to maintain an "intermediate" standard of living. The primary reason for the low earnings of women is occupational segregation. The overwhelming majority (80 percent) of jobs held by women are concentrated in only 20 of 420 occupations listed by the Department of Labor. These occupations are mainly in retail sales, clerical work, light assembly, the catch-all category of "service work," and they are characteristically low paid and dead ended. In fact, real earnings have been declining in the sectors of the work force where women are concentrated. Between 1973 and 1979 average hourly earnings in services, measured in 1972 dollars, fell from $3.16 to $3.08; earnings in retail trade fell from $2.70 to $2.61. In the same period, earnings in largely male manufacturing jobs increased.

As a result of the combined effects of changes in family patterns and occupational segregation, the fastest growing group among the female poor are single mothers with young children. By 1981, the Census reported 9.4 million female heads of families. (Meanwhile, the media's fancy notwithstanding, the number of men raising children on their own showed no significant increase in the decade of the '70s.) The increase in households headed by women is most striking among blacks. Some 45 percent of black families are now headed by women, as compared to 14 percent of white families. But despite the stereotype of the "black welfare mother," poor female-headed households are increasing more rapidly among whites than among blacks.

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES for progress out of the occupational ghetto of "women's work"? Some trends are encouraging. Where only 4 percent of the nation's lawyers and judges were women in 1971, women accounted for 14 percent in 1981. In the same period the percentage of the nation's female physicians rose from 9 to 22 percent, the percentage of female engineers increased four-fold (from 1 percent to 4 percent), and the number of women holding skilled blue-collar jobs also increased. But despite these gains by a narrow stratum of better-prepared women, average female earnings relative to men actually declined slightly, from over 60 percent in the 1950s to 59 percent today. The stability of this ratio—despite the striking gains made by some women, particularly in the professions—is depressing evidence of the deterioration of the economic status of the majority of women workers.

Long-term structural trends within the U.S. economy offer little hope that market forces will produce an upturn in women's occupational prospects. And it's not because the number of jobs available to women is declining. In fact, low-paid "women's work" is expanding, because of two important trends in the labor market.

One is the long-term sectoral shift away from manufacturing and toward service and clerical jobs. In the 1970s this shift accelerated as a result of both expansion in the service and retail sectors and a rapid decline in manufacturing, especially in the highly unionized and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

well-paid steel, automobile, and rubber industries. According to Emma Rothschild, 70 percent of all new private-sector jobs created between 1973 and 1980 were stereotypically women's jobs in such areas as fast foods, data processing and other business services, and health care. The result is a marked feminization of the work force, but in jobs that are "badly paid, unchanging, and economically unproductive."

A second trend affecting both the gender composition of the work force and women's economic status is the reorganization of work associated with increasing automation. In his classic 1974 study, *Labor and Monopoly Capital,* Harry Braverman showed that the pressure to maximize profits leads employers to replace well-paid, skilled jobs with badly paid, unskilled jobs that are likely to be defined as "women's work." Automation, and most spectacularly the automation made possible by new microelectronic technology, accelerates this trend toward what Braverman calls "the degradation of labor." Skilled jobs for men become less skilled jobs for women; and skilled work for women is replaced by less skilled work: the machinist is replaced by an unskilled operator, the department-store buyer by the clerk who tends a computerized inventory system, the secretary by the word-processor operator.

In short, the occupational ghetto of "women's work" has grown larger, and opportunities for both men and women outside this ghetto have shrunk. One obvious consequence is that fewer men will be able to earn a family wage—a fact that renders the anti-feminist vision of a restored family with the father the breadwinner and the mother the housewife utterly hollow. More and more women, married or not, will have no choice but to be wage-earners. Another consequence is that many women will be poor and remain poor, whether or not they are employed.

No Hope for The Jobless?

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3, 1983. (UPI) — A research group has a bleak forecast for millions of American workers in economic distress: They can expect to face chronic unemployment or poverty wages throughout the decade.

A report by the group, the National Planning Association, predicted, in fact, that the extent and severity of labor-market distress would probably increase in the 1980s. "Even if economic recovery is strong enough to reduce overall unemployment significanty, serious structural problems in the labor market will leave concentrated groups in distress," said the report's author, Daniel Saks, professor of economics at Vanderbilt University.

Such distressed workers, according to the 70-page report made public this week, are those who have no job or receive wages too low to get them out of poverty.

Professor Saks suggested policy changes to help this group, including income-maintenance programs for adults whose employment problem is persistent and alternative schools for high school dropouts. □

Women and Social-Welfare Programs

In a hostile economy, women—and not only poor women—have come to rely more and more on government social-welfare programs for their economic security. In part this results from women's greater longevity, which enables them to benefit disproportionately from programs where eligibility is determined mainly by age. Thus women receive 54 percent of all Social Security benefits, despite the fact that the average benefit paid to women is almost one-third lower than that paid to men ($215.80 a month compared to $308.70). Similarly, almost 60 percent of those covered by Medicare are women. Flawed though these programs may be, they are critical to the survival of a majority of older women who would otherwise be desperately poor.

Other programs are not age-tested, but "means-tested"; eligibility is conditional on poverty. The reliance of women on these programs has risen apace with the increase of poverty among women. In particular, female-headed families have come to rely heavily on government social-welfare programs. In 1979, according to the Census Bureau, over 3.3 million of these families, or 34.6 percent of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

total number of female-headed families, received AFDC; an almost equal number were covered by Medicaid; 2.6 million were enrolled in the Food Stamp program; and 2.3 were enrolled in the school lunch program. Thus government social-welfare benefits have reduced some of the income gap suffered by the families headed by women who can no longer rely on a male wage. In other words, the breakdown of a system of intrafamily income transfers from husband to wife has been partially offset by the expansion of a system of public income transfers.

A second group of women who benefit from government social-welfare programs are those in the expanding low-wage service and clerical sectors of the work force. For these women, social-welfare programs provide some protection against employer abuses, whether low wages, unpaid overtime work, speed-ups, or personal and sexual harassment. It is easier for a woman to resist unfair demands, and risk being fired, when she knows the result will not be starvation for herself and her children. Furthermore, because social-welfare benefits reduce desperation among the unemployed, they are less likely to undercut the wages and working conditions of those who do have jobs. By reducing economic insecurity, the social programs thus enhance the workplace power of millions of low-wage working women.

The third group of women whose livelihood depends on social-welfare programs are those who are employed by them. In 1980, fully 70 percent of the 17.3 million social-service jobs on all levels of government (including education) were held by women. These jobs accounted for fully a quarter of all female employment, according to Lisa Peattie and Martin Rein of MIT, and for about half of all professional jobs held by women. As the Reagan administration presses for a shift of funds from social welfare to military spending, a good many of these jobs will be lost, without compensatory employment gains for women. Only 0.5 percent of the entire female work force is engaged in work on military contracts. A study by Employment Research Associates estimates that with each $1 billion increase in the military budget, 9,500 jobs are lost to women in social welfare or the private sector.

Accomplishments and Failures

THE ACHIEVEMENTS of America's federally sponsored welfare programs are obvious, especially for women, but not only for women. Social Security provides some guarantees against the terrors of a poverty-stricken old age for the millions of Americans who have no private pensions, or whose pensions fall woefully short of a subsistence income. Medicaid and Medicare make it possible for more millions of both the elderly and the poor—who are, of course, the groups most likely to suffer from chronic disease and disabilities—to receive the medical attention previously largely unavailable to them. Unemployment insurance reduces some of the fear of joblessness for most of the middle class as well as the poor, and helps tide over those who are out of work through the dislocations caused by cyclical downturns and shifting patterns of investment. Federal disability programs make the fate of the ill and the crippled less miserable. Nutritional programs, particularly Food Stamps and supplements for women and infants, are credited with significantly reducing hunger and the most common forms of malnutrition. And Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) provides at least a meager subsistence for millions of the most desperately impoverished mothers and their children. All told, an estimated one-third of Americans now depend to some degree on government social-welfare programs.

In addition to easing the economic insecurity of millions of Americans, federally funded social-welfare programs often made possible innovative services and new opportunities for citizen participation. In a number of the Great Society programs of the 1960s, the federal government effectively bypassed entrenched local political hierarchies and called for "maximum feasible participation" of the communities served. People who never before had a role in public decision-making gained positions on the federally mandated community advisory boards of health, mental health, and multiservice centers, giving the recipients of services, for the first time, a voice in determining what their needs were and how they might best be met. Similarly, federal funding for rape

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crisis centers and battered women's refuges bypassed local male politicians and gave women, many of them feminist activists, a chance to create client-centered services sensitive to women's needs. Republican hostility to these programs stems, in no small part, from their role in the political empowerment of women, minorities, and the poor.

There is no question, however, that the social-welfare programs established in response to the upheavals of the 1930s and 1960s are flawed and imperfect. Their loudest critics today are on the Republican right. For nearly two decades, however, groups that depended on the programs had been sharply critical, including client groups and their advocates, women's organizations, and labor unions. On the surface, it may therefore seem that no one, neither on the right nor the left, supports the social-welfare programs, and this helps account for the timid response that has been made to the Reagan administration cuts.

In fact, however, very different sorts of criticisms are at issue. The right attacks the programs for their high cost and their presumably corrosive effect on the incentive to work. By contrast, the left criticizes the programs for bureaucratic indifference to clients; for the low level of benefits or services; for the punitive terms often exacted as a condition for receiving benefits or services; and for profiteering by businesses involved in the provision of services. Not only is this a different critique than that made by the right; it is in fact an opposing critique, and it stems from an opposite assessment of the responsibility of government.

Effects of Political & Business Pressures

IN THE MOST IMPORTANT SENSE, the shortcomings of American social welfare result from the complex political forces that shaped the programs and continue to shape them over time. Demands by the unemployed or the poor or the aged were resisted by employer interests fearing that if government provided subsistence to large numbers of people, labor markets would be weakened. As a result, the benefit levels of the key income-maintenance programs, including unemployment insurance and AFDC, have always been very low. Other programs, particularly those that provided "in-kind" benefits in the form of food subsidies or housing, or those that provided such services as medical care, easily became the target of lobbyists who stood to profit from the provision of benefits or services.

Business pressures also explain why a number of the most important programs were left to state (and sometimes local) governments to administer. For reasons that are hardly mysterious, business interests have always exerted great influence on state and local programs. When businessmen demand low taxes and restrictive social programs at the state or local level, they wield the threat of relocation. Moreover, because business interests can successfully resist state and local taxes, the revenues to fund programs at the state and local level must be extracted from regressive taxes on working people. This pattern in turn generates a climate of resentment and hostility toward locally financed programs for the poor. As a consequence, benefit levels set by the states have been kept well below the lowest local wage rates. In addition, programs have been thoroughly encased in an elaborate bureaucratic apparatus of procedures and conditions so that as little aid as possible would be given to as few as possible. Finally, the degrading treatment of those who survived the bureaucratic runarounds ensured that few would choose the dole who could otherwise survive.

The AFDC and Medicaid programs illustrate the deforming effects of private business interests on American social welfare. AFDC is notorious for its humiliating treatment of clients and the inadequacy of the benefits it provides. Monthly payments to a family of three averaged slightly under $300 in 1980, and only nine states provide more than $400 a month. In no state is the combination of AFDC and Food Stamps sufficient to raise a family up to the official poverty line. AFDC originated as a program of cash benefits to impoverished mothers raising children without a male breadwinner, and it reflected the recognition that such women could not be expected to support their children by their own efforts. However, that recognition has always been at war with another, usually unstated, imperative—that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

government must not provide benefits competing with low-wage work. Thus, although it is the only program that attempts to meet the daily needs of poor children, AFDC is pegged far below the poverty level in order, ultimately, to avoid any challenge to the determination of wages by market forces.

The gratuitous humiliation inflicted upon clients by welfare bureaucracies reinforces this effect, for it works to ensure that few will choose welfare over work, no matter what the terms. Of course, abysmal poverty and degrading treatment have other effects—depressing the expectations of poor women and their children, destroying their morale, and ensuring that they do not come to believe they have legitimate rights, even to a subsistence income. In this way, AFDC helps create the very caricature of the demoralized and dependent recipient, which is then used to justify the harshness of the program.

The Medicaid program illustrates different flaws resulting from the influence of different market interests. For decades before Medicaid and Medicare were legislated, private interests in the health sector, particularly the American Medical Association and the insurance industry, had fiercely and successfully resisted any major program of government health insurance. Medicaid and Medicare were passed over the bitter resistance of the AMA, and then only in a form ensuring that the new government financing mechanisms would not affect private control of the organization and delivery of medical care. From the inception of these programs in 1966, health reformers criticized them as inadequate and patchwork substitutes for a national health service that would guarantee the actual delivery of high-quality care. Even so, reform groups expected that Medicaid would make health care financially accessible to many of the nation's "medically indigent" (people who while not classified as poor, nevertheless cannot afford medical care).

While Medicaid helped many of the nation's poor to gain access to medical attention, the program had other, unexpectedly perverse effects. Medicaid, combined with Medicare, contributed to the rapid and still escalating costs of medical care. Conservative critics argue this is the result of excessive consumption of health services by the poor and elderly, and that prices have risen with increased demand. However, the health system is notoriously impervious to ordinary laws of supply and demand. It is mainly doctors who determine the demand for health services; only they can decide whether a problem will be dealt with in one visit or through extensive diagnostic and treatment procedures. Moreover, provider groups such as the American Medical Association and the American Hospital Association have lobbied hard, and largely successfully, to minimize government control of the prices of their services. As a consequence, these programs have turned out to be a bonanza for the medical industry. For everyone else, especially the over 30 million people who presently lack coverage of any kind, it has meant spiraling medical costs.

Like AFDC, Medicaid is administered and partly financed by the states, and benefits and eligibility have been largely left to the discretion of the states. The states have set eligibility levels so that most of the people the program was originally intended to serve have been excluded. In fact, in almost all states, Medicaid eligibility was tied to welfare eligibility. Strained state budgets, combined with the identification of Medicaid as a "welfare program," made it an easy target for budget-cutters. Consequently, as medical inflation encouraged by some features of the program drove costs up, Medicaid coverage shrank, providing fewer services to proportionately fewer of the people who need care.

None of these failures is the result of the inevitable bumbling of "Big Government." Rather, they were the result of a federal government so weak it ceded administrative control over many of the programs to states and localities where they were cannibalized by hostile interests, so weak it could not establish decent benefit levels, and so weak it could not curb the distortions forced on it by private market interests. A weak government has produced weak programs, and weak programs are indeed difficult to defend.

The welfare state's critics on the right pointed a clear direction for the contraction of the programs that the Reagan administration has attempted to implement. Underlying each

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of its major initiatives was an effort, not only to slash benefits and services, but to increase the power of business interests and reduce the power of beneficiary groups. This was the significance of the Administration's "New Federalism" proposals, which would entirely have abdicated the federal role in the AFDC or the Food Stamp program in favor of state and local government. The Administration's persistent efforts to eliminate the legal-services program and to rewrite the regulations of a number of the programs so as to weaken procedural safeguards are similarly an effort to shift power relations by expunging the legal rights of program beneficiaries.

Some Guidelines from the Left

IF THE WELFARE STATE'S CRITICS on the right have pointed a direction for concrete changes, so does the critique developed by left and liberal reformers. In fact, the specific elements of an expanded and reformed social-welfare policy have been outlined before, both by the Welfare Rights movement in the 1960s and by the feminist movement in the 1970s. Our agenda should begin, very simply, with the demand for higher levels of benefits. Nothing could be more critical to the well-being of poor women and children than an immediate increase in the benefit levels of the AFDC program, for example, which, at a minimum, should support families at a level above what is officially defined as "poverty."

Beyond this obvious short-term goal, we should begin to work for organizational reforms that will strengthen the influence of the beneficiaries of income-maintenance programs and reduce the influence of business. Three basic principles can guide us.

First, responsibility for social-welfare programs should be firmly fixed at the federal level. Influence from the right works for decentralization to the state level, in order to increase the power of business interests over the income-maintenance programs that bear most directly on labor markets. For just this reason we should fight for the outright nationalization of financing and policy-making responsibility for such programs as AFDC, unemployment insurance, and Medicaid. Benefits and eligibility standards should be uniform across the nation, and their financing should not be subject to the whims of state legislators.

Second, bureaucratic discretion in the determination of eligibility and benefits should be reduced. Notwithstanding its avowed hostility to "government interference," the right has worked to increase bureaucratic discretion and to strip beneficiaries of procedural protections. Arbitrary and variable decisions can be shattering to recipients and reinforce the notion that social-welfare programs are a form of charity. It follows that we should work for the elimination of elaborate conditions for determining eligibility—conditions that inevitably will increase bureaucratic discretion and intimidate applicants. In their stead, we should promote broad and easily determined criteria that reduce the need for invasive investigation and give benefits and services the status of *legal rights*.

Third, over the longer term, we should work toward the consolidation of programs so as to promote common stakes and stronger alliances among the many segments of the American population that have come to rely upon the welfare state. The present system separates means-tested programs such as Medicaid from universal programs such as Medicare and Social Security, thus breeding competition and animosity among recipient groups. Worse, within these broad categories, an incredible array of disparate programs applies differently to people depending on their age, their sex, on the specifics of former employment, on marital status, or even on the value of their home furnishings. The right has capitalized on this fragmentation of social-welfare programs and their recipients. It follows that we would work for a unified system that, through the breadth and strength of its constituency, would not be vulnerable to attack by a business-oriented president or Congress.

An adequate and unified system of income maintenance would go a long way toward easing the economic insecurity of low-paid working women and toward improving the lives of women now living in poverty. But an income-support program cannot provide goods and services if these are not available in the market

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at affordable prices. Private business has not found it profitable to operate child-care centers or clinics offering primary and preventive health care in low-income areas, much less centers for rape victims or refuges for battered women. Market-priced housing and health services too will remain beyond the reach of most women, even if the income programs are improved.

Of all these services, perhaps none is more critical to women than child-care provisions. It seems obvious that without affordable and reliable child-care options, mothers of young children should not be expected to enter the labor market or job-training programs. Yet now many women are forced to do exactly this, leaving an estimated 6 to 7 million young children without any preschool or after-school care, and millions more with informal and often substandard child-care arrangements. Equally important, for teen-agers as well as adult women, is access to a full range of reproductive health services, from contraception to abortion to prenatal care. In the past three years, access to these services has been steadily reduced. Yet for women, these services mean the "right to control our own bodies," and they are preconditions for economic security.

In the face of the harsh assault from the right, we need to renew the long-standing feminist commitment to government-funded social services. For the short term, the first priority is to reverse the cutbacks in government spending for low-income housing, day-care centers, refuges (which have depended heavily on federal grants), and other services. In the long term we need to build up these services, not as stop-gap measures but as a vital part of our social infrastructure, which must meet the critical needs of a vast sector of the population. Services that have heretofore been limited by narrowly defined eligibility criteria (such as subsidized day care) should be expanded because they are necessary, and because expansion will ensure a broad constituency of support and public involvement. Finally, services that have been offered as "commodities" to more or less passive "consumers" (like most medical care) should be redesigned to increase client participation and influence. There is a wealth of experience to draw on: health centers and refuges run by women and child-care centers run by community groups are only some of the examples of services organized to involve and empower clients. The democratic spirit that infuses such "alternative" service institutions, combined with government responsibility for sustained and adequate national funding, points an important direction for the reform of the American welfare state.

The Meaning of the "Gender Gap"

POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY is clearly a factor in the assault on the social-welfare programs. The Reagan administration does not depend on the poor for votes, and their lack of organizational resources makes effective resistance at the national level difficult. Further, the fragmentation of the American social-welfare programs has taken its toll in fragmentation and division among beneficiaries. But this overlooks a politically critical fact: the American poor are disproportionately women. With the revival of feminism in the late 1960s, women have developed a considerable organizational capacity, and a consciousness of common interests that cuts across class lines. As a result, the Reagan administration's policies are galvanizing a broad movement that joins together middle-class, working-class, and poor women.

The women's movement of the last two decades, like that of the late 19th century, has looked to government as the guarantor of women's rights, as in the intense mobilization for the ERA; it has also looked to government as a guarantor of economic security. As early as 1967, the "bill of rights" adopted at the first national conference of NOW called for government action to alleviate poverty, to enforce laws against sex discrimination in employment, and to improve the circumstances of older women through changes in the Social Security system. Ten years later, when thousands of women gathered at Houston for the First National Women's Conference, they passed a far-ranging series of resolutions calling for, among other things, a major federal role in the provision of child-care services, a federal program of national health insurance, a federal policy of full employment, and increases in federal fund-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sam Holman
James T. Farrell

Farrell's last novel, never before published, captures the excitement of New York City's intellectual climate in the thirties. The reader will recognize many characters in this *roman à clef*.

"Farrell captures a time so perfectly, and a man within that time so preciously, that you will forget neither Holman nor that period in American life. . . . another piece of an enormous and significant body of work by an American writer with the stamina to believe in himself and his art."

—*Milwaukee Journal*

Cloth $15.95

The Case of the Revolutionist's Daughter
Sherlock Holmes Meets Karl Marx
Lewis S. Feuer

The story of the legendary Holmes's historic meeting with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Holmes's search for Marx's daughter Eleanor leads him into the Bohemian socialist intellectual world of London in 1881.

". . . vintage Sherlock Holmes. . . . delights because it challenges history buffs and quenches the thirst of Sherlock Holmes fans for stories about their hero. Even Marx might like this book."

—*Philadelphia Inquirer*

Cloth $14.95

Prometheus Books
700 East Amherst Street Buffalo, New York 14215

ing for AFDC and other income-support programs to "provide an adequate standard of living." Taken as a whole, the Houston resolutions amount to a demand, not only for greater federal intervention against sex discrimination, but for the creation of an adequate social-welfare system for all Americans.

In the years that have passed since the Houston conference, the need for expanded and reliable social-welfare programs has become even more acute. For one thing, the experience of the '70s shows that employment is not a solution to women's poverty: in what are typically "women's jobs," full-time and year-round work does not necessarily bring one over the poverty level. Despite the ups and downs of the business cycle, the expansion of low-paid "women's work" continues, and this points to the continued need for public income supports and services for women, whether they are employed or not. Furthermore, a growing proportion of poor women are mothers of young children. Even with a vast expansion of child-care services, some women may prefer to remain at home with their small children rather than do double duty as full-time employees and full-time homemakers. Poor women, and especially single mothers, should have this option, just as the wives of the affluent do, and social-welfare programs should make the choice possible.

THESE ARE THE REASONS, then, that women, and especially feminists, now lead the way in resisting the attempt to destroy the welfare state. They are no small force. Moreover, they are not alone in this effort. The Reagan administration still waves the banner of laissez-faire, but the banner is tattered and unconvincing. The public economy exists, in reality and in the understanding of most Americans. The central political question that has emerged is not whether government shall play a large role in American life, but who will pay for and who will gain from what government does. The significance of the steady stream of poll data showing women's strong disapproval of the Reagan policies is that women have been the first to recognize the question, and the first to offer the answer of resounding support for government policies promoting economic security and equality. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Michael Harrington

The New Gradgrinds

"Now what I want is, Facts. Teach the boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. . . . Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities."

So Charles Dickens began his novel *Hard Times*. Thomas Gradgrind is a marvelously cruel and distorted caricature of a follower of the utilitarian social thinker Jeremy Bentham. Gradgrind sees numbers instead of people. Dickens himself, one of the greatest chroniclers of poverty that ever lived, was a liberal of sorts, not a radical, and he hoped—as the ending of his haunting story of the "hungry Forties," *A Christmas Carol*, made clear—that good and decent people would finally wake to their responsibility. But if power turned out to be much more hard-hearted than he thought, and change more a result of conflict than of the belated decency of the rich, he made the poor and their tormentors come alive in a mob of imagined people.

A little later in *Hard Times*, there appears this unforgettable evocation of Gradgrind's study, crammed with the "blue books" of government statisticians:

> In that most charmed apartment, the most complicated kind of questions were cast up, got into exact totals, and finally settled—if those concerned could only be brought to know it. As if an astronomical observatory should be made without any windows, and the astronomer should arrange the starry universe solely by pen, ink, and paper, so Mr. Gradgrind in *his* observatory (and there are so many like it), had no need to cast an eye upon the teeming myriads of human beings around him, but he could settle all their destinies on a slate, and wipe out all their tears with one dirty little bit of sponge.

In January 1984 President Reagan's Task Force on Food Assistance refused to recognize the palpable evidence of growing hunger in the United States. Late in 1983 Senator Edward Kennedy had gone to San Francisco, Minneapolis, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Eastern Kentucky, talking to people on soup-kitchen lines and finding that many were the new poor: members of intact families, not drifters or welfare mothers.

Kennedy also gathered data. In Kentucky food programs had increased by 75 to 400 percent; in Minneapolis-St. Paul by 150 to 400 percent; in San Francisco by 200 to 400 percent; in Pittsburgh and Detroit between 300 and 400 percent. Reagan's Commission found such reports merely "anecdotal." Indeed, it relied on new Gradgrind statistics to argue that the problem of hunger had been exaggerated. Those statistics, we will see, systematically underestimate the number of the poor. No matter. A computer programmed with reactionary premises was taken as more authoritative than all the evidence assembled by Kennedy or even the testimony of the conservative director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

From the forthcoming book *The New American Poverty* by Michael Harrington. Copyright © 1984 by Michael Harrington. Printed by arrangement with Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The implications of that naive trust in biased statistics are frightening. Federal food monies, the commission said, should be given to the states, which should then decide how to spend them. But a great accomplishment of the Food Stamp program is that it establishes uniform national levels of nutritional assistance; that the Mississippi poor get as much as the New York poor, something that never happens when, as with AFDC, there is "states rights" welfare.

In a sense, I would like very much to ignore all the statistical and definitional complexities: those serried figures are so distant from the reality of poverty. Yet that cannot be done. In the modern world, where prejudices disguise themselves as mathematical arguments, one has to counter misleading numbers with more honest numbers.

This undertaking is not merely a matter of defending the poor against the new Gradgrinds. How one defines poverty also has profound policy implications.

The problem in recent years has come not from overstating but from understating the number of the poor. Meanwhile, there have been some remarkable statistical "victories" over social ills that have left the reality totally unchanged. For instance, full employment is now being defined by a rate of *un*employment—the "full-employment" unemployment rate. In the early 1960s, that rate was set at 3 percent, with an interim target for the Kennedy administration of 4 percent. Time passed and the level of "acceptable" unemployment was regularly—and officially—increased. The experts had the decency to change the name of what they were defining: from "full employment" to "high employment" to "the inflation-threshold unemployment rate." By 1983 the Council of Economic Advisers had in effect raised the old "full-employment" unemployment rate to 7 percent. This certainly made "full employment" easier to achieve, even though it left 8 million people jobless.

But it's with regard to poverty that the political manipulation of the numbers is most marked. The reason is simple. Official government definitions in this area serve to determine eligibility for entitlement programs. A change of a few tenths of a percent in those receiving assistance can mean a reduction in federal outlays of millions and millions of dollars. In the '60s, when it was assumed that endless economic growth would automatically generate huge revenues for Washington, that did not seem too important. But in the '70s and early '80s, with the nation on an economic roller coaster, a decreed statistical victory over poverty became a way of cutting down on real spending.

Back in 1963 Mollie Orshansky, an economist who specializes in poverty, worked on what was to become the official definition of the poverty "line" (the "line" marks the level of poverty for an urban family of four, and there are other lines for larger and smaller units, for those who live in the country, and so on). She decided to use a minimal diet—just sufficient to hold body and soul together—as the base. There were, however, four food plans that had been developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). All of them sought to define a nutritionally adequate diet, but they differed in details—and cost.

Orshansky's strategy was to take the price of a minimal diet and multiply it by three to compute total income at the poverty line(s). In 1955 the Department of Agriculture had carried out a Survey of Food Consumption concluding that the average American family spent one-third of its after-tax income on food. Therefore, Orshansky reasoned, multiplying the food cost by three would yield an approximate total budget. But which of the food plans to use? It came down to a choice between two. If one took the "low-cost" budget and multiplied it by three, that would result in a poverty line (for that family of four) of $3,995. But if one used the "economy budget" of the USDA, that meant a poverty line of $3,165. The latter was about 80 percent of the former and, making it the base, significantly reduced the number of the *statistical* poor. The Council of Economic Advisers then settled this question by a political decision: it opted for the "economy" food budget, rounded off the numbers and, in the first official analysis of poverty in its 1964 report, established the poverty line at $3,000.

I do not want to suggest that there was something sinister in these events. There is no such thing as a "value-free" analysis of a con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tentious social issue that relates to the spending of large amounts of money. When, for instance, I came up with my own poverty line in *The Other America* (1962), I relied on intuition and a sense of fairness as well as the few hard numbers then available. I can't blame others for being as subjective as I was. Moreover, standards change over time. In 1899, Seebohm Rowntree had thought it was possible to make an absolute definition of poverty based on minimum physical needs. But what are minimum physical needs? In the 1880s, reformers thought it all right for several families to share one water tap and a privy on a landing, or for a family with several children to live in one room.

However, the Administration's decision to opt for the lower food budget in 1964 was not, I suspect, made on the basis of such complexities. The bureaucracy simply did not want a figure that would put 25 or 30 percent of the people—50 or 60 million citizens—below the poverty line(s). But this choice was made at a time of increasing federal aid to those in need. In the '70s, when the political and cultural wind changed, the political definition of poverty did in fact become quite sinister. The new Gradgrinds were using statistics to blot out the tears of suffering men, women, and children.

Control of statistics is one of the critical functions of power in a democratic society. The numbers define the limits of the possible, confer awesome legitimacy upon some parts of reality and deny it to others.

It is, then, necessary to explore the intellectual thicket in which the numbers hide. Difficult, even tedious as this might seem, it must always be kept in mind that the statistics are surrogates for human misery.

First, a few basic concepts. Poverty and inequality are not the same thing, even though they are clearly related. I stress this point since it is crucial in dealing with one of the conservative critiques of the very idea of an antipoverty effort. The poor, said people like Barry Goldwater in the '60s, are just a statistical artifact, and for that reason it is a mathematical impossibility to abolish poverty. There will always be inequality, the senator said; there will always be people at the bottom. And since it is impossible to eliminate the lowest fifth, the poor will always exist, albeit with rising living standards.

That is simply not true. The lowest fifth does indeed exist in Sweden, but in both absolute and relative terms it is better off than the lowest fifth in the U.S. In the early '70s, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development estimated, using the same measure, that 13 percent of Americans were below the poverty line and 3.5 percent of the Swedes. Death is a rather absolute fact. In 1975, in Sweden, an infant was much more likely to survive the first year of life than in the United States (there were 8.6 deaths for every 1,000 births in Sweden, 16.1 in this country). Again, the infant mortality rate in the United States for blacks is three times that for Sweden as a whole (24.9 against 8.6 per 1,000). And clearly, one reason is the better medical care in Sweden for people at the bottom of its income structure. There are then distinctions as objective as death between the various lower fifths.

Also, relative differences. In the United States the income of the top quintile is slightly more than eight times that of the bottom quintile; in Japan, hardly egalitarian, the difference is five to one. The American poor are thus more "unequal" than the Japanese poor. Indeed, America now lags behind ten other advanced nations in terms of its per capita wealth. So the lowest fifth in this country gets a smaller percentage of a smaller economic pie than the lowest fifth in the European welfare states.

One can imagine a society with no poverty and considerable inequality. Suppose families of the lowest fifth in the U.S. had an average income of $30,000—which would mean they could take care of their necessities—but that there still was a tiny upper class of billionaires. This is mathematically possible, and Goldwater's attempt to make a statistical case for the biblical statement so often quoted on the right—that the poor will always be with us—fails.

I do not want to fall into the opposite error: that there is no relationship whatsoever between poverty and inequality. That was a central proposition for Lyndon Johnson's antipoverty effort. Growth was going to generate huge federal surpluses, which would have to be spent if they were not to deflate the economy. There-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fore, the official thought of the '60s was, it was possible to abolish poverty without any redistribution of income whatsoever. In point of political fact, any major effort to end poverty in a short period of time—particularly in the '80s when the illusion of endless growth has vanished—will have to be redistributionist. Resources are not infinite. If everyone at the bottom is brought up to a minimal level of decency, those at the top can, and should, pay.

So while poverty is not inequality, it is significantly related to inequality. There is also a very real sense in which the official definition of the poor has over the past decades become both less generous and less exact.

In terms of real buying power, in the '70s, median income (50 percent of the people get more, 50 percent less) went up, then down, and ultimately nowhere. In 1980 it was, measured in constant dollars, about what it had been in 1970—and 5.5 percent less than in 1979. This is one way of saying that the nation has experienced more than a decade of stagnation and crisis, culminating in the absolute decline of 1982. But during this same period the poverty line, defined as a percentage of median income, went down. It was 54 percent of median income in 1950, 40 percent in 1970, and 38 percent in 1979. Clearly, there was a deterioration of the relative position of the poor even before Reagan became president.

Thus thinkers from the most diverse points on the political spectrum endorse a definition of poverty that shows little or no progress in the U.S. over the past quarter of a century. Or rather, there was some significant progress in the '60s, stagnation in the '70s, decline in the early '80s. Some of the poor have been winners (the aging, the full-time workers, at least until Reagan); some have been losers (the AFDC mothers). But poverty itself has persisted.

A serious definition of poverty has to be as absolute as death, as relative as changing living standards. One has been told for years that the contemporary American poor are much better off than medieval royalty or present-day Indian beggars. But American poor now live neither in the Middle Ages nor in India. Because it takes

Redistributing Income — the Wrong Way!

Do you know that between 1979 and 1984 the average disposable income of the poorest one-fifth of American families declined by 9.4 percent? That is one of the major conclusions of a very valuable—not at all radical—study conducted by economists Frank Levy *and* Richard C. Michel *for the Urban Institute of Washington, D.C. Here is an excerpt from their study:*

A large number of factors [have] reenforced each other to make 1979-84 a period of little [economic] net growth and increasing inequality. More precisely:

(1) Assuming the current economic recovery continues, the disposable income of the average family in 1984 will stand at $20,807. From a political perspective, this number is 3.5 percent more than in 1980 just before President Reagan took office. From an economic perspective, the number is 2 percent less than its previous peak in 1979. (These and all other figures . . . are adjusted for inflation . . . in 1982 dollars.)

(2) Between 1979 and 1984, inequality within the income distribution will have grown significantly. Among the poorest one-fifth of families, average disposable income will have fallen from $7,546 to $6,833, a decline of 9.4 percent. Among the richest one-fifth of families, average disposable income will have fallen from $39,348 to $39,158, a drop of 0.5 percent.

(3) Between 1980 and 1984, average per-person expenditures of federal, state, and local governments will have risen by 11 percent in real terms. This increase amounts to $450 per person and will occur in spite of efforts to restrain spending at the federal, state, and local levels.

(4) The average family's federal, state, and local tax payments in 1984 will stand at $7,053, that is, 2.6 percent less than its level in 1979. Moreover, these taxes are being subsidized by a large structural federal deficit. Closing this structural deficit will require additional income reductions of about $560 per family.

With respect to causality, we find:

(5) The principal brake on economic growth over the period was a cycle of oil-price inflation, recession, and recovery during which family incomes showed no net gain. In this sense, the period

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this fact into account, I believe that Peter Townsend's definition of the poor in his book *Poverty in the United Kingdom* is the most subtle and realistic analysis available.

Townsend writes, with a somewhat deceptive simplicity, "Poverty . . . is the lack of resources necessary to permit participation in the activities, customs, and diets commonly approved by society." An interesting example: tea is without nutritional value yet, in some countries, it is clearly a "necessity of life." But does this mean that we are back with Barry Goldwater, having defined poverty in such a way as to equate it with the bottom fifth, or tenth? Is all this uproar over the "poor" merely a way of saying that some people have more and some less? Not at all.

TOWNSEND, a man of the left, anticipated the central conservative critique of the poverty definition being made by the right today. This critique holds that the official poverty line(s), defined in terms of money income, ignores other sources of income that the alleged poor receive, most notably Food Stamps, housing subsidies, and medical care. But long before this conservative discovery, Townsend—and the American sociologists S. M. Miller and Pamela Robey—had insisted that poverty be defined in terms of all the major aspects of life, including those famous "in-kind" goods and services.

So when Townsend computes (in the late '70s) the income of the poor, he includes the cash they receive, their capital assets, the value of their employee benefits, public goods and services, and even private "in-kind" goods and services (gifts, the worth of personal support services). For Townsend, and for Miller and Robey, the reason for this emphasis is contrary to that of the conservatives: Townsend, Miller and Robey show that the poor are poor in those categories, that it is not simply cash income they lack but legal services, public amenities, basic human respect, and on and on.

Using this sophisticated calculus, Townsend made a very important discovery. If one conceives of "deprivation" in terms of the ordinary

---

1979–84 was a repeat of 1973–79, the period following the first OPEC price increase. The no-growth experience of both periods was far worse than the experience between 1947 and 1972, when family income would typically grow by 15–18 percent in five years' time.

(6) One source of growing inequality was the relative decline in welfare and Food Stamp benefits. From 1979 to 1984, average earnings per family will have declined by 4 percent but average welfare and Food Stamp benefits per family will have declined by 14 percent. About three-fifths of this decline—8 percentage points out of the 17 points—resulted from the actions of fiscally hard-pressed states, which increased welfare benefits far more slowly than the rate of inflation. The remaining two-fifths resulted from Reagan administration expenditure reductions.

(7) A second source of growing inequality arises from relative changes in the tax structure. Average taxes for the richest 20 percent of families will have declined from 31.6 percent of income in 1979 to 31.1 percent in 1984. Average taxes for the poorest 20 percent of families will have increased from 9.7 percent of income in 1979 to 11.9 percent in 1984. . . .

(8) Among different types of families, those who will have done best over the 1979–84 period are the elderly. Their reliance on Social Security (which was largely inflation- and recession-proof) and interest income will have caused their average after-tax incomes to remain roughly constant. Those families who did worst were young and middle-aged female-headed families who were heavily dependent on welfare and Food Stamp benefits. Families headed by a young or middle-aged black woman will have had their after-tax income reduced by 10 percent. . . . Families headed by a white male in his prime working years will have lost about 3 percent of their after-tax income.

These estimates were completed in the spring of 1983 when forecasts of 1984 real Gross National Product stood at $1,580 billion. Current GNP forecasts have been revised to $1,620-$1,630 billion, and these revisions would increase our estimate of average disposable income by about 2 percent. Thus 1984 family incomes may actually regain their 1979 levels. But our story's basic contrast—the lack of income growth in 1973–79 and 1979–84 compared to rapid income growth in 1947–72—remains unchanged. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aspects of daily life—vacations, eating a meal in a restaurant, having a birthday party for children—then a careful survey of people in the United Kingdom reveals a very important chasm in the society. The evidence from his questionnaire, Townsend writes, shows that there exists a "threshold of deprivation . . . that is, a point in descending the income scale where deprivation increased disproportionately to the fall in income." Above that point, families and individuals could reasonably participate in the common activities of their society. But at the "threshold of deprivation," a quantitative decline in cash (an objective, measurable phenomenon) meant a qualitative decline in social participation (a somewhat less precise notion).

Gertrude Himmelfarb's otherwise fascinating, more recent study of the idea of poverty in the 19th century trivializes Townsend's important work. She writes as if his definition were mainly based upon "the lack of hot breakfasts, of birthday parties, of holidays, and of the habit of dining out." In fact, those indicators taken from daily life were merely illustrations of the contrast between the two basic modes of social existence, that of the poor and that of everyone else, and they were cited in a study that is rigorous in statistical analysis. The psyche, the spirit, the very routine of poverty, Townsend says, define a universe of its own.

What needs to be emphasized here is that poverty is not an income level but a condition of life. This insight is not some vague philosophical notion. It speaks of a reality that shows up on survey questionnaires and even in the relative frequency of mental illness among the social classes. In fact, when one adopts this broader definition in all its implications, poverty becomes all the more obdurate.

What follows is a statistical detective story, a prospect, I suspect, not immediately fascinating to every reader. It is therefore important to stress a more substantive theme that will become apparent as the numbers are tracked to their lair: how money is actually spent on the poor.

There are two facts in American society that are as palpable as the nudity of Hans Christian Anderson's emperor. First: Between the poor and the nonpoor, who gets the most from social spending? Answer: the nonpoor get much more than the poor. And second: Among the poor themselves, who gets the most from Washington? Answer: Not the welfare poor, but the aging poor.

The stereotype directly contrary to these facts—that the United States devotes the lion's share of its social spending to the lazy, dependent poor—is one of the chief ideological defenses of our callousness. It is an utter falsification, as we will see in dealing with the most astounding conservative discovery of the 1970s: that poverty has disappeared and no one noticed.

The central thesis in this revelation is simple enough. The official poverty definition only counts cash income. It does not include the money value of the in-kind income received by the poor—the Food Stamps, housing subsidies and, above all, medical care. Therefore, it is argued, it systematically overstates the extent of poverty in the United States. When one computes the worth of in-kind income and adds it to cash income, poverty is drastically reduced or even abolished. This statistical triumph depends upon precisely what measure one uses to translate in-kind goods and services into an equivalent cash sum.

An early statement of this theme came from Edgar K. Browning in a 1974 article in *Public Interest*, the journal of those who develop sophisticated arguments for turning the nation's back upon the poor. By using the argument of uncounted in-kind benefits, Browning concluded "there is practically no poverty—statistically speaking—in the United States today and indeed there has not been for several years." In 1976, Gerald Ford's Council of Economic Advisers took up this theme.

So it was that this highly questionable—indeed, erroneous—theory began to appear in the media as a statement about reality. And then, in 1977, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), under the direction of a certified liberal, Alice Rivlin, took up the *Public Interest* thesis. By taking the "market value" of the in-kind goods and services, the CBO reduced the poverty population by 47 percent. The next year, Martin Anderson of the Hoover Institu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion, later an adviser to President Reagan, published a book on the new nonpoverty. In *The Political Economy of Welfare Reform in the United States*, he wrote:

> The "war on poverty" that began in 1964 has been won. The growth of jobs and income in the private economy, combined with an explosive increase in government spending for welfare and income transfer programs, has virtually eliminated poverty in the United States.

The political attitudes involved in all these sweeping redefinitions were complex. Some—the CBO, for instance—argued that the revisions were necessary to show that liberal programs had actually worked. Others, like Browning and Anderson, were straightforward conservatives. Another conservative tendency took the opposite tack from Browning and Anderson: federal efforts, it said, had blocked the elimination of poverty. But whether liberal, optimistically conservative, or pessimistically conservative, all these thinkers pointed in the same direction: No more money for antipoverty efforts.

There were, however, some interesting admissions along the way. The Congressional Budget Office, for instance, discovered that the normal outcome of the American economy left 25 percent of the people poor. The only reason, it added, this appalling percentage did not constitute a menace was that government transfer programs did away with roughly 80 percent of that poverty.

By the early '80s, then, the statistical abolition of poverty had turned into an academic cottage industry in the United States. In late 1983 David Stockman testified on behalf of the Administration that, despite the impression that there had been an enormous increase in poverty, the number of poor was actually declining, with even better days ahead. Small wonder that editorialists around the country had begun to take questionable theories as statements of observed fact. To be sure, they might have taken a tour of the South Bronx in New York, as almost every presidential candidate did—and the acres of rubble and the milling unemployed might have suggested that all was not well. Most of them, however, avoided that exertion.

Then, in 1982, the Bureau of the Census published a formidable technical paper on "Alternative Methods for Valuing Selected In-Kind Transfer Benefits and Measuring Their Effect on Poverty." There was a flurry of newspaper reports but they had to tell of a complexity, not a stunning simplicity like the secret abolition of poverty. There were, the Census said, serious difficulties in "cashing in" the in-kind benefits. Indeed, one plausible measure reduced the number of the poor by a mere 12.2 percent rather than by 42.3 percent (these are 1979 numbers—they predate an increase of more than 5 million people in the officially defined poverty population). Intricate statistical corrections rarely have the media impact of the initial—wrong—revelations. Small wonder then that by 1983 many people had concluded that the poor were either nonexistent or undeserving.

Why has so much attention been paid to documenting the overestimation of the numbers of the poor—and so little to exploring their underestimation? In two areas, involving millions of people, there is evidence of an undercount.

• The first has to do with the definition of poverty in terms of cash income. All of the critics of an overcount take that definition as a starting point, even as they charge that it is utterly inadequate. After they have made their computations about the value of in-kind benefits, they add them to the official poverty line in order to establish a new line. So, strange as it may seem, they implicitly acknowledge the authority of the very definition they want to replace.

One might think it would be a matter of some moment that the person who originally elaborated the cash-income definition of poverty has thought for some time that it *under*estimates the problem. In 1974 Mollie Orshansky argued that the "line" was $3,000 below what it should be and that the poor therefore numbered 55.4 million, not, as in the official count, 23.4 million. In a complex argument presented to the American Statistical Association in 1979, Orshansky (along with C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fendler) asserted that in 1977—a "good" year for the poor—the official measure understated poverty by a factor of 54 percent, that is, it *overlooked 25 million people.*

The central factor in Orshansky's revisions had to do with the relation between food cost and the total budget of the poor. In 1964, when the definition was first developed, it was assumed that this ratio was 1:3 (that one's food budget was one-third of one's total expenditures), as shown in a 1955 USDA survey of American food-consumption patterns. But in 1965 another USDA analysis concluded that the percentage spent on food was actually lower than in 1955. Adjusting the definition of poverty to conform to this empirical pattern meant that the multiplier had to be increased from 3 to 3.45. This change, along with some other technical amendments, resulted in Orshansky's conclusion that there had been a significant undercount.

The Bureau of the Census took note of this challenge, though the news did not get through to the media. This procedure, the Census said, tended to relativize poverty and such updating could mask significant reductions in poverty. But, as we have seen, there must be a relative component in any definition of poverty. Were 1955 food patterns, which were the base for the original definition of poverty, absolute? If so, in that year there was no poverty at all in the U.S., when we compare our low-income diets to diets in Europe in 1755 or in much of India today. And, as Townsend emphasized, one must look at the poor in terms of their participation—regarding food and everything else—in their country—*their* society.

Let me be fair. Decent and serious analysts can reject Orshansky's methodology without being prejudiced against the poor. I am not saying that her measure is the only plausible one. But her case cannot be ignored, not the least because she is one of the most authoritative researchers in the field. But the fact is that those who want to revise the poverty problem downward—*who make a 50 percent reduction in the number of the poor*—get incomparably more attention than those who present a very reasonable case for revising the number upward. It is, then, at least possible that the United States is now undercounting poverty by much more than 25 million people. (I say "much more than" because the poor, by any measure, have significantly increased since 1977.)

• The second area in which the poor are undercounted is not a creation of statistical method but a fact. It is well known that there are many undocumented families in the United States and equally well known that a majority of them are poor. This is why the sweatshop has made a dramatic return in the U.S. Estimates of the size of this undocumented population vary—from 5 million to 10 million people. Assuming that 80 percent of them are poor, there might be 4 million to 8 million impoverished humans in this society who have never achieved the dignity of even being a statistic.

In the spring of 1983, the Reagan administration unwittingly lent its authority to my point. The White House said that there were 6.25 million undocumented people in the country and that if the Simpson-Mazolli immigration bill, which would "legalize" some of them, were to pass, 1.7 million would become eligible for naturalization. In the Senate version of the bill, the aliens who came to the United States before January 1, 1977 would become permanent residents, those who entered prior to January 1, 1980, temporary residents. That, the Office of Management and Budget said, could mean $9.3 billion in additional welfare costs over a period of four years. Clearly, there is no doubt in the Reagan administration that we have millions of predominantly poor undocumented workers in the U.S. No doubt, that is, until it comes to *counting* the poor.

• There are also social realities that point in another direction. The U.S. has an important "underground economy" with billions of dollars in unreported income. One of its sectors has nothing to do with the poor: the professionals who provide services off the books. Another sector does harbor people who are poor in terms of reported income but not real income: the world of crime and drugs. But class distinctions hold even in the underworld, and the most successful lawbreakers tend to be white, and better educated, than the petty criminals. The latter also spend a dispropor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tionate amount of time in one of the major institutions of American poverty, the prison system.

Even taking into account the fact that there is probably a certain amount of undeclared income that abolishes the poverty of the underworld poor, still the undocumented workers and the people counted if one accepts Orshansky's revised definition are potentially more numerous than *all* those now officially declared to be poor. We are talking about an undercount that could total more than 30 million rather miserable human beings. Even if one were to accept the most extreme conservative theories about an overcount, it is probable that far more people in America are poor than we now officially recognize.

Let us now look at how the conservative theorists compute the cash value of in-kind goods and services.

The statistical conservatives mix apples and oranges in their calculations. On the one hand, they still use the cash-income definition of poverty; on the other hand, they change it radically. Consider an analogous case. Suppose the U.S. government were suddenly to announce that it was going to tax the cash value of public schools, including colleges and universities, and that the amount would be tacked on to the income of all those with children when they computed their income tax. The insurance value of all employee medical plans also would be counted as taxable income, and so would the worth of all business perks, like food and transportation. It is not hard to imagine the outcry that would result. Part of the complaint would be that tax rates decided in terms of cash income, and set at a certain level for precisely that reason, were now being applied to noncash income. But this is exactly what the statistical revisionists are doing to the poor. For when the poverty line is adjusted, or certain in-kind benefits are computed in determining eligibility for a social program, it is not just a matter of theory. It has to do with how much money people will have to dispose of—just as the income tax does.

In two significant areas, then—the technical question of how the poverty line is fixed, and the fact that there is a huge and uncounted population of the undocumented poor—there is evidence of an undercount. As a result, even if the new Gradgrinds were right in their calculations of an overcount, the number of the impoverished is higher than the official statistics, not lower. But those new estimates about how we exaggerated poverty are *not* accurate. Rather, they overgeneralize because of a single, rarely stated fact: that the aging poor receive a disproportionate share of the in-kind benefits. To attribute what they get to the poverty population as a whole is simply wrong.

This fact about the aging is a subordinate aspect of a larger truth: that the welfare state in the United States is primarily benefiting people over 65, most of whom are not, and for a long time have not been, poor. Obviously, I do not say these things because I propose to take benefits away from the aging. But I do want to point out that there are very special problems in evaluating these benefits—above all in assigning a cash value to nursing-home and/or terminal health care—which makes it dubious to apply them to the poor as a group.

• Three techniques have been devised for computing the cash value of in-kind benefits. First, the market-value method estimates the dollar worth of the benefit in terms of its purchase price in a private market. This approach yields the highest estimates of an overcount and the greatest reduction in the number of the poor. Favored by conservatives, it was also used by the Congressional Budget Office. When it is employed by conservatives, a considerable irony surfaces. These normally implacable critics of government waste assume that all in-kind goods and services are provided to the poor with 100 percent efficiency, that the public sector is every bit as good as the private sector. Such assumptions, so convenient in the argument against any further poverty expenditures, are quickly forgotten when it comes to other areas of social policy.

• The second technique values the goods and services in terms of their worth to the recipient. What is "the cash amount for which recipients would be willing to trade their right to the in-kind transfer given their current incomes"?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Perhaps a poor person does not share the extraordinary assumption that every good and service is provided in just the right proportion and with total efficiency. That person might want less, or more, of certain benefits. One way of figuring the cash value for the recipient is to look at how much other people, similar in most respects but not getting the in-kind benefit, actually do pay for it.

• The third method is called the "poverty-budget share value" approach. It deals, among other things, with a central problem in this whole exercise: how does one evaluate the worth of medical care that goes mainly to the aging poor? The Bureau of the Census gives an excellent case in point. In 1979, the market value of Medicaid coverage for an elderly person in New York State has been estimated at $4,430. This is almost $1,000 more than the poverty line for that person ($3,472). But clearly this $4,430 is "income" in a very special sense, since it cannot be spent on food, housing, or any other need (and is indeed most unwelcome "income" since one has to be sick to get it). If one were to take that $4,430 at face value, then a person could enter the middle class, or even the upper middle class, by virtue of having a long and expensive terminal illness. So the "poverty share" method limits the value of medical care (or any other in-kind benefit) to its share in the definition of the poverty budget. Anything over that sum is not really additional disposable income but, more often than not, too much of a good (or terrible) thing.

• The many complications in each of these methods need not concern us here. Taking the extreme case—the one in which each approach yields the highest "reduction" in poverty—the differences are striking. In 1979 terms, "market value" eliminates almost 13 million people, or 42.3 percent of the total; "recipient value" cuts out a mere 9.305 million persons, or 26.7 percent; and "poverty-budget" shares drop out 7,757,000 or "only" 20.1 percent. Remember that the highest computation of the overcount —13 million—is not even equal to half of the possible undercount (30 million or more).

Moreover, the bulk of the downward revisions mainly comes from looking at the in-kind benefits of one group among the poor—the 15 percent who are over 65 years of age—and then attributing them to the poverty population as a whole. This point requires us to focus on the way antipoverty measures in the United States work primarily for the aging. It also utterly subverts Martin Anderson's assertion that "an explosive increase in government spending for welfare and income transfer programs" was a major reason for the so-called disappearance of poverty in America.

Between 1975 and 1980, the Census documents, the real buying power of cash public assistance transfers ("welfare") did not explode. It declined. But one area might seem to be an exception: Washington increased its outlays for medical care from $28 billion in 1975 to $58.545 billion in 1980. This more than doubling was, however, fictitious in considerable degree, since it represents primarily an inflation of medical costs of around 75 percent, and not an increase in medical services. Moreover, slightly more than half of that rise is attributable to Medicare, a program for the aging only, and 85 percent of its recipients are *not* poor.

This leaves Medicaid, a means-tested program for the poor alone. Not so incidentally, it accounts for about two-thirds of the in-kind benefits so critical to the statistical triumph over poverty. But then, when one looks a little more closely, it turns out that 46 percent of all Medicaid funds go for nursing homes and other forms of institutional care. To qualify for that, the elderly, blind, or disabled have to forfeit their Social Security or Supplemental Social Security Income. In short, the largest single portion of in-kind income goes to people waiting to die or utterly unable to care for themselves and without any cash income. Whether this constitutes the advance in well-being predicated by the conservatives and the Congressional Budget Office is, I think, at least open to question.

LET US LOOK at the *reductio ad absurdum* of all these figures. In 1979, the medical-care benefits for a single aging person were equal to 85.9 percent of the poverty line; for two persons, 136.7 percent of the line. That family, it will be noted, turned a handsome "profit" on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

being sick. I do not, let me repeat, begrudge the elderly their benefits, but object to assigning those benefits—which are a very special kind of income for a very particular group of the poor—to the poverty population as a whole.

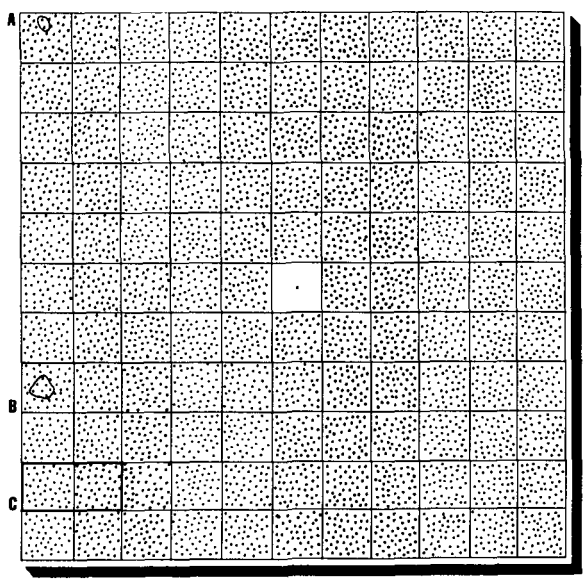
In short, a great deal of the reduction of poverty by giving a cash value to in-kind benefits is the result of statistical smoke and mirrors. Moreover, even the critique I have set down here of these tricky numbers somewhat understates the dimensions of poverty. Almost all of the figures I used come from the late '70s or 1980. And so our calculations must lag somewhat behind the reality. In this instance, that is of great significance because in the years 1981–83 poverty was on the increase, first of all among working people, and second, among those aging poor whose "one-time" loss of the indexing of their Social Security benefits in 1983 will affect the base of their payments for the rest of their lives.

How many poor people are there? Honest analysts can sincerely differ on the definition, but the reasons given for the alleged great decrease in the number of the poor in recent years are simply not persuasive. I would suggest that there are in the range of 40 million to 50 million Americans who live in poverty. That is roughly the same number I suggested more than 20 years ago in *The Other America*; but since the population has increased in the meantime, it represents an exceedingly modest decline in the percentage of the poor.

It is also, if I may take off my stifling statistical mask and speak in a human voice, an unambiguous outrage. □

Do you think we have enough nuclear firepower?

Our government doesn't think we have enough.



Judge for yourself.

The dot in the center represents the destructive force of all the firepower used during the entire six years of World War II. Three million tons of TNT. Three megatons.

The other dots portray the firepower of the world's nuclear arsenals. 16,000 megatons. More than 5,000 World War IIs.

Do you think we have enough?

The top lefthand circle (circle A) is the firepower of just one U.S. submarine. Think of it. Twice the firepower used in World War II aboard a single submarine.

That one submarine could destroy over 150 Soviet targets.

We have 19 such subs, plus 15 others with even greater firepower.

Do you think we have enough?

The Pentagon doesn't think so. The Pentagon wants more. Like the new Trident submarine. Its firepower is portrayed by the lower lefthand circle (circle B). About seven World War IIs.

Just two squares (labeled C) on this chart (more than 250 megatons) represents enough firepower to destroy all the large- and medium-sized cities in the entire world.

Do you think we have enough?

The Reagan Administration doesn't think so. In the next decade, the U.S. plans to build 17,000 new nuclear weapons.

If you think we already have enough weapons, call, toll-free, 1-800-NUCLEAR. We will send you information about what you can do to help halt the arms race. You can make a difference.

If you saw, and were shaken by, the TV movie, The Day After, and are looking for something concrete to do (and if you think this ad is an effective way to educate people about the dangers of the nuclear arms build-up), here's a suggestion, and an offer.

The suggestion. *Get together with friends and neighbors who feel as you do and, chip in on the cost of publishing this ad in your local or neighborhood newspaper.*

The offer. *Simply call the Public Media Center (415-434-1403), and we will send you a copy of the ad in a form ready to place in your local paper.*

Campaign Against Nuclear War
25 Scotland Street, San Francisco, CA 94133

YES. Enough is enough. We must reverse the arms race now. We don't need more nuclear weapons. I want to help:

Send me a photostat copy of this ad so I can run it as an ad in my local newspaper. Enclosed is a check for $5.00 to help cover costs.
Send me a poster version of this ad suitable for framing. Enclosed is a $10.00 check to help cover the cost of each poster.
Send me the 24 page Nuclear War Prevention Manual which has practical information about things I can do right here in my community. Enclosed is a check for $5.00 for each manual.
Here is a tax deductible contribution to bring this message to others:
$20 ___ $15 ___ $50 ___ $75 ___ $100 ___ $500 ___
Other $ ___ (Please make checks payable to Campaign Against Nuclear War.)

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____

U.S. Congressional staff have reviewed the facts in this ad and have found them accurate.

Documentation available on request.

Produced by Public Media Center

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jim Sleeper

Neoliberalism's Hesitation Dance

A Better Liberalism or a Retreat to the Right?

Not long after attending the *Washington Monthly*'s Neoliberal Conference last fall, I had a gnawingly incomplete exchange with one of the panelists about his movement's prospects. He's a young writer of fairly typical neoliberal pedigree: prep school, the chilly Harvard College of the 1970s, then on to the precocious circle at the *Washington Monthly*, and finally to glossy, "responsible" national journalism. Since I'd been scoring neoliberalism as top-down tinkering by privileged if well-intentioned young men with public-policy schemes that don't really challenge American corporate power, I was taken aback to find him accusing me of liberal elitism.

□

"You call for democracy," he said, "but the democratic process in this country has been rejecting liberalism in recent years, and working-class people are no exception. I think Reagan will win big in '84. So you ought to be lying awake nights thinking, 'Why isn't anyone listening to liberals anymore? Why can't we attract a constituency?' And that will lead you, inevitably, I think, to the conclusion that the excesses and abuses of unions, poverty programs, and entitlements aren't minor quibbles with liberalism but are standing squarely in its path. Liberals have to face them and fix them. You dogmatic socialists frustrate me because you won't ever do that."

Well, I thought I had him on charges of limited political imagination alone: "In the first place," I answered, "the 'democratic process' in this country has turned off fully half its eligible participants; it ratifies Reaganism only as it shrinks in size and vitality. Which means that if the rest of the people are cynical about liberal programs, it's not necessarily because they've moved to the right.

"You should remember," I added grandly, "that just because corporate conservatives oppose liberal social programs, that doesn't mean those programs haven't served conservative interests too. People know that Democratic-party liberalism has been a jumble of fitful efforts to adjust people's needs to corporate-dominated priorities—a pacification program without economic integrity or social vision.

"My point," I continued, in what I assume is good democratic socialist form, "is that people can oppose liberalism from the left, out of progressive yearnings for a broader social vision. And if we socialists have defended the liberal programs, it's because they do give people some breathing space for that, a base from which to challenge the larger system. If we've defended unions, it's not for their wage demands alone but also for their potential power to shift the system's social costs to where they belong. We never lost sight of the fact that rising prices, deepening inequities and unemployment, the decline in health care, education, and other services have causes more systemic than the abuses of unions or entitlement programs. If no one listens to liberals like Ted Kennedy anymore, maybe it's because people see liberals as largely of a piece with the Rockefellers, rationalizing a system that no longer works. Of course, liberalism has curdled into defensive legal claims, bureaucratic protectionism, and the scramble by better organized constituencies to hold onto eroding gains —the interest-group politics and general cynicism you denounce. I don't lie awake nights

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wondering how to defend liberalism; I lie awake wondering how to put serious new alternatives before the people.

"You neoliberals aren't really helping," I concluded. "Charlie Peters, the neoliberal founder of the *Washington Monthly*, claims you're for community, for a society that shares its burdens and rewards. But then he feels compelled to add, 'We criticize liberalism to rescue it from its myths, not to destroy it.' The *New Republic* makes the same mistake; it says in an editorial that neoliberalism's purpose is 'to make good intentions marketable again.' The very phrase is an unnecessary apology, a concession to the dominant ideology of selfishness and hucksterism. We need *organizing*, rooted in real needs and hurts, pitted against economic concentration and maldistribution of the fruits of labor. You neoliberals frustrate me because your rational good intentions won't ever organize the power to make real changes."

□

My listener finessed a speedy retreat—in defeat, I assumed. But now I'm not so sure he went home to think things over and become a socialist, or that the neoliberal movement will quickly discover the bankruptcy of good intentions in the American corporate dispensation. It won't, because something is missing from answers like mine, some critical spark that would arouse the people among whom neoliberals move, people whose public discourse has been wrenched rightward.

A month after this declamation, I got a sense of what was missing from my comments while reading Elizabeth Drew's profile of Senator Jesse Helms in the July 20, 1981 *New Yorker*. Helms's chief legislative assistant James Lucier told Drew:

> The problem in our country is [that] there is a tremendous gap between the people . . . and the leadership groups that run the country—not just the media, but also the politicians, corporate executives. . . . They have been trained in an intellectual tradition that is not only at variance with the way the ordinary person thinks but is contradictory to it. . . . What I mean is, the intellectual training of those groups . . . is highly rationalistic . . . , it excludes most of the things that are important to the people who are selling cars and digging ditches and getting their kids on the bus to school. They aren't dealing with abstractions. . . . That's the problem we have in the Republican Party. Ford and Kissinger are only the right wing of the left wing; they are the right wing of the [rationalistic] revolution. . . . They only want to go more slowly than those on the left.
>
> The principles that we're espousing are the ones that have been around for thousands of years: the family . . . , faith . . . that God is the creator of this world that we live in, and that there is a higher meaning than materialism. Property as a fundamental human right . . . , and that a government should not be based on deficit financing and economic redistribution, . . . loyalty to the country that you live in. . . . What Helms has been doing is appealing to people by going around the leadership structure. When someone like Helms or Reagan offers an ideal for a better America or belief in God, he's getting strong support even from people whose lives may not exemplify those virtues. . . . It's not the "new right"—people are groping for a new term. It's pre-political.

I felt gripped by an acute sense of vertigo. Lucier was describing a country where Ted Kennedy is of a piece with the Rockefellers, all right, but only because he and they are together on the extreme left horizon of American political vision, the Eastern horizon, if you will, where New York and Cambridge lie. From Lucier's vantage point, liberals and corporate planners constitute an elite that threatens all the "pre-political" verities that people think sustain their lives. Kennedy's personal life is fair game because it's part and parcel of his liberal social position. And if *he* represents the far left horizon, then socialists are so much beyond the rim that we're invisible.

The sense of vertigo only deepened as I realized how my neoliberal acquaintance could have confused my position with traditional liberalism. While he and most neoliberals have sojourned among the "rationalistic" elites at such places as Harvard—and indeed see themselves as saving a potentially "rational" liberalism from the darkness of the right—many of them have sojourned even longer in heartland American communities whose public horizons seem to be what Lucier says they are. True,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many neoliberals are young achievers from corporate suburbs, but Charlie Peters was a member of the West Virginia state legislature before getting involved in the Peace Corps. James Fallows, the Washington editor of the *Atlantic*, grew up in Texas, and after Harvard he wrote speeches for a Georgia peanut farmer. Peters and Fallows, like other neoliberals, haven't forgotten the political landscape they've left behind. (Indeed, there was a West Virginian on nearly every panel at the neoliberal conference.)

Nor have the neoliberals forgotten the special patience and humility, the careful pace and posture required of fighters for justice in places where local and statehouse establishments have seemed monolithic and immovable, places where often the only appeal is to notions of comity, faith, and fair play, all conceived to be part of an enduring national character. They recoil from the pushy, "alien" demands of union organizers and liberal lawyers, who seem to thrive on the confrontation and litigious acrimony that small communities believe they honorably avoid. Shouldering their own burdens responsibly, as they see it, they are unimpressed by celebrations of the poor's power to disrupt, and outraged by rationalizations of criminal behavior as a response to injustice. They also profoundly mistrust liberal government programs, which seem to substitute bureaucratic fiat for the freely given mutual aid that embodies and reinforces the ancient, "pre-political" truths. Thus Peters, fairly echoing Lucier:

> Snobbery, like the credentialism to which it is related, is another neoliberal target. The snobbery that is most damaging to liberalism is liberal intellectuals' contempt for religious, patriotic, and family values. Instead of scorning people who value family, country, and religion, neoliberals believe in reaching out to them to make clear that our programs are rooted in the same values. . . .

Even as I understood Peters's perspective better, I began to recover my balance, knowing how socialists might reply. In the first place, no socialist will sit still for the neoliberals' confusion of left politics with liberal snobbery. We know that the denigration and disintegration of traditional bonds is not the work of some alien agent from the Eastern horizon but the result of a dangerous combination of classical liberalism's doctrine of "negative rights" with the increasing concentration of economic power. Protected by the liberal state, late capitalism, in the fictitious "persons" of its corporations, has proved itself eminently compatible with, and willing to market and profit from, virtually every kind of decadence, every violation of honor and taboo. Those professionally engaged in corporate marketing and consolidation tend to disdain the old conventions.

Conservatives like Helms and neoliberals like Peters cannot keep this fact a secret forever. If they insist on placing socialism beyond the Easternmost horizon, they will learn that the world is round when homegrown socialists in their own backyards fight runaway shops, real-estate speculation, and other forms of exploitation, doing so out of commitment to community, childrearing, and celebration affirmed in Michael Harrington's flat Midwestern accents and Jean Bethke Elshtain's familial memories.

The difference is that we believe, with all due respect to the presumed "givens" of national character, that human constants must forever be recreated in the process of being reaffirmed. We would carry communal responsibility forward into the allocation of investment and the organization of production, rather than confine it to the charmed circles of church and family life. Helms and many neoliberals seem to think that those circles can be set off somehow from the corporatization of American life. The left brings the sobering news that in the modern West there are no such things as "pre-political" values, only the struggle in history toward "post-political" values nourished by a just economy.

To stop short of that, as neoliberals do for all their celebration of the small entrepreneur and their brave words about responsible investment, is to render the traditional sources of liberty, honor, and faith defenseless against powerful corporate solvents. It is to condemn family, church, neighborhood, and ethnic bulwarks to an increasingly narrow defensiveness. I think neoliberals know this; the "hallelujah" crowd pushing religion at the fringes of their conference made many of them a bit nervous.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There's no going home again, and they know it —which isn't to say that religion is dead or all Spirit departed from this earth.

Nor is it to deny that urban socialists have often been too quick to proclaim the demise of the structures Lucier calls "pre-political." We are impatient with what we're sure are people's doomed hometown illusions. We sometimes sound to neoliberals and conservatives as if we actually wanted to hasten the decay of old forms within which many people still live and move and have their being. We are surprised by the resiliency of traditional bulwarks and beliefs.

In addition, we've often resorted, because there seemed no choice, to the classical liberal logic of negative entitlements—of legal defenses from harassment—rather than to more sensitive affirmations. Gay rights become a vehement demand for protection by the liberal state, not an affirmation of erotic and emotional possibility. Feminism, struggling against patriarchal oppression, sometimes seems determined to use the state to ward off every sense of familial obligation across the generations. Settling thus for "negative rights," we hardly know what to make of San Francisco's gay Republican gentry or the "feminism" imputed to corporate ladder-climbers. These are contradictions we socialists often resolve quite poorly.

Socialists also face challenges and corrections from neoliberals in the economic realm, as in California Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig's gripping account, at the conference, of the end run he had to make around teachers' unions to raise money for education. California's taxpayer revolts meant that only substantive reforms and higher standards could convince voters that more money would really mean improvement; yet Honig recounted that he couldn't find a single Democratic sponsor in the state legislature for his modest reforms, because he couldn't get the endorsement of the defensive unions.

Honig had to go to conservative Republicans for support, deflecting their demands that curbs on bargaining, seniority, and tenure be part of the reform package. To do that, he had to find 50 corporate leaders and 15 Chambers of Commerce to write the Republican governor and legislative leaders to say that, yes, they would support (relatively progressive) taxes if the money would improve the quality of education. And to do *that*, Honig, bereft of significant progressive support, had to present education to the businessmen as a form of investment in human capital, designed to enhance California's position in the wider economy. He actually had to fend off minority attacks on one of his proposed reforms—the reintroduction of a core curriculum: "How can they argue that those of us who want *all* kids to know more history and English are elitists?"

Only when the program's passage seemed imminent were the teacher and supervisory unions willing to send representatives to the press conference detailing the plan. They'd been so frightened of losing a few minor prerogatives that even California's sharp decline in the proportion of its income going to education hadn't swayed them.

There are questions a less defensive union might have put to Honig and to the state's voters: "If educational reform is presented as a kind of capital investment, shouldn't the businesses that will benefit most pay the freight? How progressive will the taxes be? Have voters resisted proposed school levies in the past because taxes have been regressive, burdening those who can least afford to pay? How can we strengthen democratically elected authority over educational reform while still demanding that corporations foot the brunt of the bill?" Instead of seizing the initiative on these questions, organized teachers adopted a defensive trade-union posture that parallels other groups' resort to negative legal entitlements on social questions. Finally, the left simply had to trust Honig's values and skills.

Honig may well be worthy of that trust. But neoliberal conference-goers also touted Donald Burr, the president of People Express, an anti-union, "worker-owned" airline created in 1980 out of Burr's and others' conservative union-busting experience at Texas International airlines. By paying his machinists roughly half the union scale and hiring "temporary" reservation clerks on renewable three-month contracts (which save People Express the cost of health benefits and unemployment compensation pay-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ments), Burr undercut the competition. His airline grew rapidly, while such unionized lines as Eastern slid toward bankruptcy.

In this case, a better model has been developed by socialists, including William Wimpisinger, the International Machinists' president, and economic analysts Michael Locker and Stephen Abrecht, who represented the unions in the recent agreement to restructure the airline. Eastern's woes were less the result of labor costs than of poor management decisions —as, for instance, a crash program to buy new equipment based on a miscalculation of the market (a miscalculation heartily endorsed by the banks and Boeing, who supplied the capital and the planes). While the agreement negotiated by the Machinists and Locker/Abrecht involves wage cuts amounting to 10 or 12 percent, the pay still is far higher than at People Express, and Eastern workers have a chance for what Locker calls "real codetermination" in running the company, from designing new facilities that will require fewer future workers (but no layoffs) to redesigning flexible work rules at the supervisory level.

Even boardroom decisions are influenced not only by direct union participation but also by the fact that workers now own 25 percent of the company. And, unlike People Express employees, they're *organized* into a potential bloc of votes. In addition, $3 million in preferred stock will produce dividends, depending upon profitability, which could pay back the equivalent of the wage cuts over ten years—an incentive to efficiency and productivity. By contrast, Locker argues, "People's workers have meetings and offer suggestions, and they certainly have more motivation than a unionized company with bad labor-management relations would, but they really don't have ownership."

More important, Burr was able to lay off hundreds of "temporary" reservation clerks, most of them minority people from Newark, to hire college student replacements, even though some of the Newark workers had been "temporary" for as long as two years. They were terminated without a single day's notice, a reminder to neoliberals that stodgy unionism is often rooted in traumatic encounters with the power relationships of capitalist production.

Peters has made haste to endorse the Eastern agreement. The fact is, it would never have come from neoliberals, who are suspicious of union power and enamored of management initiatives like Burr's.

My diversion with neoliberalism is nearly at an end. But I wonder why more neoliberals don't come over my way. Perhaps they limit their criticisms of capitalism to plaints about "welfare for the rich" and the most egregiously wasteful outcomes, only to settle for People Express, because they're afraid that anticapitalism itself is a form of snobbery. People seem to prefer the corporate dispensation much as they appear to prefer the constants of family and church, even as both disintegrate around them.

Certainly, the corporate apologist Irving Kristol, who cunningly pushes the "antisnobbery" line, had little trouble staking out a role for himself at the conference as a "friendly" critic and coach for the new neoliberal movement. "Despite much academic agitation about the horrors of being an 'organization man,'" Kristol has written, "the majority of those who now work for a living, of whatever class, have learned to prefer the security, the finely calibrated opportunities for advancement, the fringe benefits, the paternalism of a large corporation."

Kristol's penetration of the conference obscures a more penetrating socialist observation about people's apparent preferences for corporate security, offered in a *Mother Jones* interview by left economist Gar Alperovitz:

> If you really go to the core of most family life, two-thirds of the people live in constant fear of losing what they've got. And there's the defensive quality of interpersonal relationships. To say nothing of the fear of crime, which is the necessary concomitant of economic decay. I think the telling point will be when we can get to a place where people respond eagerly rather than fearfully to everyday ordinary encounters. We don't even have a glimmer of what it means to live in a society where people begin from a position of security in their everyday existence and then move out from there to engage others.

I think the Eastern Airlines settlement moves its participants in this direction, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that its glimmer of a progressive alternative should give neoliberals pause. They're bringing up the rear on this one.

Many of the people I met at the *Washington Monthly*'s conference were full of energy, compassion, and faith. They understand that there is never any final political substitute for an ethic of social responsibility based upon conscience and good will. They insist, with some truth, that our freedom will always depend in part upon the charity and restraint of those entrusted with power, for no democracy can be wholly participatory.

But I just don't think that neoliberal fair-mindedness will translate into political will—that is, into real sacrifices by the wealthy, or serious moves toward responsible investment and worker control—as long as neoliberals and others keep striking illusory "balances" between the sins of the poor and the sins of the rich, the abuses of unions and the abuses of corporations. The poor and the unions are more visible and vulnerable to political censure because abuses by the rich and the corporations inhere in established power relationships.

Neoliberals, I fear, want national consensus and comity too desperately to let themselves stand outside those power relationships long enough to challenge them—as a democratic movement really must. Probable result, when push comes to shove: labor discipline and crackdowns on programs for the poor, but only token moves toward productive investment and progressive taxation.

Tom Paine, in *Common Sense*, had something to say about wishful comity that neoliberals might ponder. What he wrote about the British monarchy I would now apply to corporate capitalism and the way it undermines those who profess to value family and faith:

> Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offenses . . . and, still hoping for the best, are apt to call out, "Come, come, we shall be friends for all this." But . . . bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me whether you can hereafter love, honor, and faithfully serve the power that has carried fire and sword into your land?
>
> But if you say you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, . . . Are your children and wife destitute . . . ? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands . . . ? If you have not, then you are not the judge of those who have. But if you have, and can still shake hands with the murderers, then you are unworthy of the name of husband, father, friend, or lover. . . .
>
> This is not inflaming matters, but trying them by those feelings and affections . . . without which we should be incapable of discharging the social duties of life, or enjoying the felicities of it. □

MODERN 'ASIATIC' DESPOTISM

~masquerading in communist workers' ideology

by Frank A. Barbaria

A comparative study of Soviet and ancient 'Asiatic' despotisms. Critical theoretical errors by Marx are revealed; errors still adhered to by present-day Marxist movements; errors which aid the Kremlin's masquerade.

400 pp., 10 maps, Index of Concepts. LC: 81-69826
Cloth $12.°° ISBN 0-9606992-0-1; Paper $5.°°

Add $1.00 for mailing; U.S. or Worldwide

IDEAS (Inter-Disciplinary Endeavor to Analyse Societies)
8649 · Springfield Avenue, La Mesa, California 92041

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Peter Schneider

Jumping the Berlin Wall

Mr. Kabe, who was in his mid-forties and on welfare, first came to the attention of the police when, with a running start from the West, he jumped the Wall in mid-Berlin, heading East. Right by the Wall he had discovered a lot where abandoned rubble formed a natural staircase. He could climb it so high that he had only to push himself up by the arms in order to swing onto the Wall. Other reports mention a Volkswagen bus, whose roof Kabe allegedly used for a springboard. It is more likely that he got that idea later, after the authorities had ordered a cleanup operation because of him.

Kabe stood on the top for a while in the searchlights of the Western patrol that hurried to the spot. He ignored the calls of officials trying at the last minute to explain to him which was East and which was West, and then jumped off to the East. The guards of the other German state arrested Kabe as a border violator. Yet even under hours of grilling, Kabe displayed neither political aim nor serious desire to stay on. When asked who had sent him, Kabe replied that he had come for his own sake, that he had simply wanted to get to the other side. He wore out his interrogators, who wanted to know why he hadn't used a border crossing, by pointing out again and again that he lived right across the way and had taken the only direct path, over the Wall.

The interrogators could think of no better explanation for this extraordinary reversal in direction than that Kabe had several screws loose. They sent him to the psychiatric clinic at Buch, but the doctors could find nothing wrong with him, other than a pathological desire to overcome the Wall. Kabe enjoyed a special position at the clinic as a blockade runner whose jump had defined the points of the compass anew.

Three months later, a well-fed Kabe was turned over to the permanent delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany. They brought him back to West Berlin in a government Mercedes. There, without showing any emotion, he read the newspaper articles about his jump that a neighbor had collected. Then he shut himself up in his Kreuzberg apartment and remained incommunicado.

The Eastern newspapers sized him up alternately as a "border provocateur" and as "unemployed and desperate." A Western tabloid speculated that Kabe had been paid by the Eastern secret police to jump, so that they could point to one escapee who wasn't visible only from behind. This hypothesis drew fresh support from a journalist who claimed to have traced Kabe from Kreuzberg to Paris. Directly after his return to the West, it seemed, Kabe had taken himself to the French metropolis and, in a suspect part of town, had run up bills that could hardly have been covered by welfare checks.

The truth about this story is that, after three months of free care in the psychiatric clinic in the East, Kabe found three months' worth of welfare payments in his West Berlin account.

From the book *The Wall Jumper* by Peter Schneider. Translation copyright © 1983 by Random House, Inc. German edition copyright © 1982 by Herman Luchterhand Verlag GMBH & Co. KG. Reprinted with the permission of Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In order to fulfill an old desire, he withdrew this sum and bought a ticket on the sleeper to Paris. However, once he had recuperated in Paris at the expense of the two German states, he returned to West Berlin and jumped again.

Brought back once more three months later, Kabe promptly repeated the offense. The West Berlin authorities failed in their attempts to get at Kabe by legal means. After all, he had illegally crossed a state border that doesn't exist in the eyes of the West German regime. In the language of the constitutional law experts, Kabe had merely been exercising his right to freedom of movement.

West Berlin authorities no longer found this interpretation satisfactory, once the East Berlin clinic had presented bills for Kabe's room and board. The West Berliners decided to incarcerate him in Havelhöhe Hospital for self-destructive tendencies. But the diagnosis didn't hold up under scrutiny: after all, Kabe's jumps had proved that the Wall could be crossed going East without damage to body or soul. What's more, they demonstrated that in town, the border strip behind the Wall was not mined. The doctor in charge found nothing wrong with Kabe other than an irresistible urge to overcome the Wall. Rather than a straitjacket, he recommended that the authorities recognize the Wall as a border. They replied that the Federal Republic of Germany couldn't recognize the Wall of Shame as a state boundary just for Kabe's sake. This didn't prevent the doctor from declaring Kabe competent.

Released from the clinic, Kabe went straight back to the Wall. Altogether, he jumped 15 times and put a serious strain on German-German relations. After one of his last jumps, it occurred to the authorities to take him far from Berlin, to quieter areas where he might continue his jumps over old castle walls. He was driven in a government Mercedes to relatives in south Germany, where he behaved very reasonably for two days. On the third day, he bought a train ticket to Berlin and jumped.

Questions about the motives of his jumping drew nothing more from Kabe than this: "Sometimes it's so quiet in the apartment and so gray and cloudy outside and nothing's happening and I think to myself: Hey, let's go jump the Wall again."

Before his arrival in the West, Walter Bolle had spent a total of seven years in DDR prisons, always for the same offense: illegal border crossing, attempted flight from the DDR, attempted border violation. As a part of the German-German skin trade, he was sold to the West in 1973 for 50,000 West marks. He received his residence permit for the Federal Republic at the emergency reception center in Giessen and left at once for U.S. military headquarters in Heidelberg. Demanding to speak to the head of counterintelligence, he told the sentry that he wanted to plan something against the DDR. He wasn't admitted. He moved into an apartment in a small town in southern Germany, and found a factory job as a metalworker. But since he didn't like piecework or living in a residence with foreign laborers, he quickly gave up his job.

Shortly thereafter Walter Bolle came to the attention of West German police when he stole a Mercedes truck from the factory's parking lot and crashed the border into Austria. He was given a six-month suspended sentence. Then he volunteered for the West German military; he wanted training in sabotage and the use of heavy weapons. The army wanted nothing to do with him. So he offered his services to the French Foreign Legion. They stationed Bolle on Corsica and gave him training in sabotage and heavy weapons, after which he deserted and returned to West Germany via Marseille and Geneva. Once there, he moved in with another deserter whom he had met in the Foreign Legion.

He tried to interest his friend in the following project: each of them would organize a commando group, one in the East and one in the West; then they would advance on a broad front against the Wall and tear it down.

No one, not even his ex-Legionnaire friend, was enthusiastic about Bolle's project. So Bolle went to West Berlin, jumped the Wall at Lübars, and told the border guards who seized him that he wanted to come home—there was nothing happening in the West. After days of questioning in which the State Security Service took part, Bolle was informed by an officer of that service that he would have to prove himself before he could come home for good.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He would have to go back to the West and do some work for the State Security Service in order to show he was worthy of the privilege of living in the DDR.

AT THIS POINT, the story begins to get lost in the clouds of restricted testimony, contradictory statements by friends and, most of all, Bolle's inconsistent memory. Later he maintained in a West Berlin court that he had anticipated his recruitment, even had sought it out. Of course, he knew that prisoners who have been bought out of the DDR can't legally return to their country. That's why he had expected not only his arrest but also the attempt to recruit him. He had pretended to go along because it was the only way to get back to the DDR and "settle a few accounts." From the beginning he had planned to infiltrate the State Security Service and betray all his co-workers to the Americans.

It is certain that Bolle carried out missions for the State Security Service. They piloted him back to the West along a secret route known as the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail, and he set right to work. His first job was to follow his earlier movements in the West and provide the State Security Service with reports and pictures from each of his previous stops. No one knows how he felt about this labor of recollection. But he probably got a certain satisfaction, if not a sweet sense of revenge, out of photographing the gate to U.S. Headquarters in Heidelberg, skulking through the grounds of his metalworks, photographing the foreman, copying the menu at the workers' canteen, interviewing his onetime companions at the residence, noting their complaints about the misery of piecework and preserving them in invisible ink on sheets of sensitized paper. He must have described the customers at a bar he had once frequented with a similar vengeance, since he was supposed to look out particularly for individuals who were having secret love affairs or who showed homosexual tendencies.

With the information he had gleaned, Bolle returned to the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail at the scheduled time, flashed his identification—the decal of a Leopard tank—at the entrance, and tape-recorded everything he hadn't already written down for his contact officer. His reports proved satisfactory, so he was taken on as a full-time employee of the Ministry for State Security and sent back to the West with new instructions. As ordered, he presented himself to the West Berlin political police and revealed that he was a DDR agent. He told his interrogator the incredible story of his progress—how the leader of a projected war against the DDR had become a collaborator in the Ministry for State Security—with one slight twist that may actually have been the truth: he claimed to have signed on with the Stasi only in order to qualify for the work he really wanted with Western intelligence. Then he willingly described his Eastern contact officer, gave away the man's cover, described a gold cap in his right lower jaw and a wristwatch he wore too high, probably to hide a tattoo. The only facts Bolle suppressed were that he was leaking all this on orders from the East, and that he was memorizing the corresponding features of his Western interrogator.

It is probable, though not certain, that the West Berlin political police also recruited Bolle as an agent. The fact that he wasn't arrested speaks for itself. Whether he was on a single or a double mission, it is known for sure that Bolle returned to the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail soon after unmasking himself, in order to report on his visit to the other side. In the process he was able to use almost all the phrases he had put down in the West Berlin protocol describing his Eastern chief and the man's office. Aside from the names of the heads of state whose framed portraits hung on the wall behind each of the enemy chiefs, and aside from the difference between a gold and an amalgam filling, a Zeiss and a Swiss watch, the texts proved identical. A quote from Stalin that Bolle had learned in school applied neatly: "Leaders come and go, but the German people remain." For the word "people," he substituted "lampshade," "wallpaper," "office chair."

From this point in the story, it is impossible to make out for whom or what Bolle was working: the East, the West, himself, or a united Germany—even Bolle probably no longer knew.

He subsequently joined an ad hoc Committee of Free Berliners and took part in propaganda campaigns, particularly those directed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against the Wall. Soon he attracted attention in the group by trying to radicalize its activities. He proposed that they attack the S-Bahn, form an armed defensive unit, drop leaflets from balloons sent over the Wall. His fierceness made the group leader suspicious. The leader felt that Bolle was taking an overly literal approach to the committee's declaration of war on the abuses of the socialist system, and he did his best to keep Bolle out of the real action. Bolle got his revenge by telling his Eastern contact officer that the leader was a homosexual. He also gave him credit for a project that existed only in Bolle's mind: setting up an illegal radio transmitter for propaganda that would prepare all Germans to march against the Wall. To his Western contact officer, Bolle described the same project as a provocation engineered by the East.

Still, he won the serious attention of both secret services only when he set up the ominous transmitter himself. From a garret in Kreuzberg he preached war against the Wall—and so for a while managed to carry out a part of his original plan. He confirmed the cartoonlike perception each state had of its opposite number and, by playing their projections off against each other, he lived out his own madness. Paradoxically, he could take every step in his double-crossing game with conviction. Participating in the operations of the Free Berliners' Committee must have seemed as right to him as revealing those operations to the State Security Service. Betraying his Eastern contact officer to his Western counterpart must have seemed as necessary as the reverse. Bolle had got himself into a situation where he stayed truest to himself when he betrayed each German state to the other on orders from both.

BOLLE WENT ASTRAY ONLY when he noticed that neither of his employers was interested in destroying the transmitter. Both were awaiting developments, presumably for greater media effect when each did finally accuse the other of political meddling. At this juncture, Bolle recalled the starting point of his enterprise and set off again for U.S. counterintelligence. There he presented himself as a collaborator of the Americans who had been working without pay for a year. Under questioning, it became clear that Bolle hadn't met an operative other than his contact officer in his whole time at the State Security Service. All he could supply was the officer's code name, his physical features, and a few details of his office decor.

The Americans treated Bolle as an East German spy and turned him over to the West Berlin courts. In his summation, by contrast, the High Court judge characterized the defendant as a lost man, someone who, in his confusion, had declared a single-handed war on the DDR. The sentence, furthermore, was based on the fact that Bolle had only endangered people in the West. He was given a ten-month suspended term, including his pretrial incarceration. When I asked for Walter Bolle's address at the central housing office, they told me that he had left for parts unknown, but that a lot of people had asked for him. □

To Our Contributors:

A few suggestions:

(1) Be sure to keep a copy of your ms—the mails aren't always reliable. And please remember that we can't return articles unless they're accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

(2) Please don't write to ask whether we're interested in such and such an article—it makes for useless correspondence. Look at our last few issues to see if your idea fits in. Or take a chance and send us your article.

(3) Type your ms *double-spaced*, with *wide* margins. Check all your figures, dates, names, etc.—they're the author's responsibility.

(4) Notes and footnotes should also be typed double-spaced, on a *separate* sheet. As we're not an academic journal, we prefer that they, wherever possible, be dropped altogether or worked into the text.

(5) We're usually quick in giving editorial decisions. If there's a delay, it's because a few editors are reading your article.

(6) Please bear with us—we have accumulated quite a backlog of material, and you may have to wait for a few issues before you see your article in print.

THE EDITORS □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jonathan Frankel

Bar Kochba and All That

This article is part of a series, all written by Israeli contributors and dealing with Israeli society and politics, made possible by a grant from Mr. Harry Kahn, to whom we express our gratitude. — EDS.

A heated public debate in Israel, lasting from May 1980 until the outbreak of the Lebanese War in June 1982, followed Yehoshafat Harkabi's attack on Shimon Bar Kochba, the second-century leader of the anti-Roman revolt in Judea, 132–35 C.E. (of the Common Era). Once the tanks were on the move, nobody was in the mood to polemicize about battles fought some 1,800 years ago. But, on the basic issue, there was no break between the debate about the ancient war and the one that still is not over. In the wake of his *succès de scandale*, Harkabi even added an epilogue on the Lebanese War to his book's English edition, *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome: Risk and Realism in International Politics* (Chappaqua, N.Y.: Rossel Books, 1982). Harkabi had used the tools of historiography to pinpoint the symptoms of disease that he perceived in the Israeli body politic. As he sees it, the Lebanese War confirmed his diagnosis.

To the uninitiated observer in the West, the ancient history of Judea must seem an improbable subject for fierce contemporary political debate. Queen Boadicea, for instance (a first-century leader of the Britons who, like Bar Kochba, rebelled against Rome), won't kindle even a spark of interest in present-day England except, perhaps, in some scholarly journals. It is indeed hard to think of any hero, even in modern English or American history, who could not be brought down today with impunity. The fun Lytton Strachey had with his *Eminent Victorians* is denied the would-be iconoclast in these irreverent times.

It is different in Israel. It's still a very young country, born in the aftermath of the Holocaust, always fighting wars or threatened by them and so, naturally, its people cherish heroism and seek out heroes. Boys graduating from the best high schools of the cities and kibbutzim have always (at least until the last year or two) volunteered for the crack fighting units, as paratroops, combat pilots, commandos. Nothing has been more highly valued in the young than bravery—and not only in the young. A succession of battle-scarred generals has made a rapid or even direct transition from command in the armed forces to the upper echelons of the political hierarchy—Allon, Dayan, Rabin, Ezer Weizman, Sharon, Bar-Lev, Gur. The more dashing among them (Dayan, but also Sharon and Weizman) benefited enormously from the widespread hero worship they had inspired. And Yadin's meteoric political rise in 1977 can only be explained by the aura of authority associated with his name ever since he had served as Israel's first chief of staff.

Given this ethos, it follows that figures in Jewish history who enjoy heroic status among the Israeli population at large belong (with the possible exception of Herzl) exclusively to those ancient days when the Jews still had the opportunity and daring to fight wars. Such warrior leaders as Judah Maccabee, Shimon Bar Giora (a leader of the Zealots in the Revolt of 66–73 C.E.), and Bar Kochba, not to mention Joshua and King David, are seen as kindred spirits—while Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the many other great poets and scholars and communal leaders of medieval Jewry remain shadowy figures.

All this is understandable enough. The ancient warriors fought over the same terrain as today's Israeli army in its various military actions. Knowledge of the tactics they adopted as they fought in these same hills and wadis can be useful to the modern officer. And, of course, they share the same language, Hebrew (although Aramaic was also spoken in the Second Temple period). A ten-year-old child going to the Israel Museum can read much of the Dead Sea scrolls (dating from the period of the revolts against Rome) without any great difficulty. It is thus no wonder that the Israeli-born population grows up with a kind of historical amnesia ensuring that events that took place two or three thousand years ago are grasped more vividly than anything from the intervening period until the present.

The phenomenon of the general as archeologist and archeological author—true of both Yadin (the professional) and Dayan (the gifted amateur)—is thus hardly surprising. (Dayan's book on the archeology and geography of Israel was called, characteristically, *Living With the Bible.*) The archeology of ancient Palestine enjoys a wide following in Israel, and it is only logical that the dig on the site of David's City in Jerusalem should have become the front line in the symbolic battle between the anti- (and non-) Zionist Orthodox Jews, who lay claim to the area as an ancient cemetery, and Israel's academic community (backed in this case, however hesitantly, by the state in the form of the Ministries of Education and Police).

In *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome*, Harkabi (who is a second-generation Israeli) describes how he grew up with a totally positive view on the Bar Kochba rebellion. "I knew nothing," he writes, "of its toll in Jewish suffering." Anything else would have been surprising given popular beliefs and the teaching of history in Israeli schools.

True, one of Harkabi's critics, Yakov Shavit (in *Yediot Ah'ronot*, June 12, 1981), argued that the Bar Kochba issue is merely marginal, for the average and even the better-educated Israelis know little about Bar Kochba and care still less. The first of these two propositions is no doubt correct. Most Israelis have no more detailed knowledge about Bar Kochba than most Americans have about Madison or Jefferson. But it does by no means follow that his name and his story are not deeply implanted in the national psyche.

We need only recall the awe with which the discovery of the Bar Kochba letters was greeted in 1960. This archeological find by Yigael Yadin's expedition was highly dramatic. Among the many second-century papyrus documents discovered in an almost inaccessible cave, high in the sheer cliffs above the Dead Sea, were 15 letters by Bar Kochba himself. After the painstaking and arduous process of unraveling the documents, it turned out that these were notes containing specific orders on various matters (supplies, arrests, recruitment) sent by the leader to his local officers, agents, and followers.

Until the discovery of these letters in 1960, hard information about the Bar Kochba revolt had been minimal. Unlike the Maccabean wars and the revolt of 66–73 C.E., respectively described in detail in the Book of the Maccabees and by Josephus in his *History of the Jewish Wars* (both, incidentally, preserved for posterity by the medieval Church, not by the Jews), the only overall description of the Bar Kochba uprising is to be found in a brief passage, a few hundred words, written by the Roman historian Dio Cassius. The Dead Sea finds made it possible to flesh out this skeletal sketch somewhat when it came to the social and administrative life of the time, but they threw no new light on either the cause or the course of the rebellion.

It would have been hard to gather this fact, though, from the way Yadin first presented his find, which had initially been kept secret. In the preface to his subsequent book, *Bar Kokhba* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1961), Yadin described the meeting in the house of Israel's President Isaac Ben-Zvi, attended by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, the cabinet ministers, and other dignitaries:

> A screen had been erected at Mr. Ben-Zvi's house, and when my turn came to report I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

projected on the screen through a film slide the colored photograph of part of a document and read out loud the first line of writing upon it: "Shimeon Bar Koziba [Bar Kochba], President over Israel." And turning to our Head of State, I said, "Your Excellency, I am honored to be able to tell you that we have discovered fifteen despatches written or dictated by the last president of ancient Israel 1800 years ago."

For a moment the audience seemed struck dumb. Then the silence was shattered with spontaneous cries of astonishment and joy. That evening the national radio interrupted its scheduled program to broadcast news of the discovery. Next day the newspapers came out with banner headlines.... Why was a whole nation elated over the discovery of a name on a fragment of papyrus? The answer lies in the magic of the name, a name treasured by folklore but almost lost to authenticated history, and the realization... that after nearly two thousand years the desert had given up factual links with the man who led the last attempt of his people to overthrow their Roman masters.

The subtitle of Yadin's book *Bar Kokhba*, which is as fascinating as his work on Masada, is *The Rediscovery of the Legendary Hero of the Last Jewish Revolt Against Imperial Rome.*

Some 20 years after the Bar Kochba discoveries, the religious establishment, led by Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren, suddenly remembered that among Yadin's finds had been a large number of human bones, which had been removed for examination and storage. The assumption (not necessarily accurate) was that these were the remains of Jews who had fled the Romans and that they should be given a ceremonial and religious reburial. In order to decide on the exact site to be used, Goren, who for many years had served as chief chaplain of the army (with the rank of general), had himself lowered, with much publicity, from a helicopter onto the cliffs above the Dead Sea. The subsequent ceremony, which took place in early May 1982, was attended by both President Yitzhak Navon and Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and it cost the country hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Begin spoke on that occasion about Bar Kochba, praising his bravery and avoiding all mention of the cost of Bar Kochba's battles in human lives. It is said that Bar Kochba, along with Jabotinsky and Garibaldi, is one of Begin's three personal heroes. When the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy met Prime Minister Begin in 1981, he was astonished, as Amos Elon has reported, to hear him talk about "nothing else" but the leader of the last revolt in ancient Judea. And let us remember here that Betar, the nationalistic, Revisionist (Jabotinskyist) Zionist youth movement in which Begin served as a leader in prewar Poland, bears the name of the mountain-top fortification near Jerusalem, Betar, where Bar Kochba made his last stand. (Betar also stands for the movement's full name, Brit Trumpeldor —the Trumpeldor Union.)

More than anything else, though, Shavit's argument about Bar Kochba's marginality was disproved by the response to Harkabi's iconoclastic campaign. Nearly all the major newspapers carried not one but several full-length articles, pro and con, on the Bar Kochba issue. A public debate on the subject, held at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem between Harkabi and Dr. Yisrael Eldad, drew a huge crowd, and both protagonists also pursued the argument more elaborately in book form. In 1982, Harkabi published an enlarged and revised edition of his book (in Hebrew) in order to deal with points that had been raised by his critics. (Incidentally and ironically, Harkabi lives in an apartment on Bar Kochba Street on Jerusalem's French Hill, an area taken over from Jordanian control in 1967.)

Given what Harkabi is attempting to do and who he is, his campaign shows with shocking clarity just how polarized Israel has become. Indeed, to gauge the depth of the crisis now overtaking both state and society, it is enough to read him and his critics on Bar Kochba. For he has not invested all this time and effort in an academic exercise of demythologization. He has, rather, set out to seize the myth and use it as a lethal weapon against the camp of extreme nationalism that now is politically dominant.

Harkabi's intentions are clear. Bar Kochba is to be held up to the Israeli public as a dread example to be shunned at all cost, as an object of terror, as the embodiment of a collective

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

death wish, as a prime case of the false messianism usually dormant but always immanent within the Jewish collective consciousness—a kind of Jim Jones acting out his fantasies at the expense not of a cult but of an entire nation.

In order to understand the enormity of all this, it has to be recalled that Yehoshafat Harkabi is no ordinary rebel. On the contrary, until the mid-'70s he was a highly respectable and respected member of the ruling elite. For a period he was in command of military intelligence in the Israeli army and he left the regular service with the rank of major general.

For many years Harkabi was an adviser to the government on the Arab world. He is a noted Arabist and has published extensively on the Arab-Israeli conflict. During the period between the wars of 1967 and 1973, he was generally regarded as something of a hard-liner (although not an annexationist). By emphasizing the extent and depth of Arab intransigence, he seemed to preclude the possibility of any negotiated settlement in the foreseeable future. This put him very much in conflict with many other Israeli Arabists—most conspicuously, perhaps, with Shimon Shamir—and with important sections of the academic world in general. The thrust of his analysis at that time was in harmony with and probably served to reinforce the unbending policies of Golda Meir. Today Harkabi is a prominent professor of international relations at the Hebrew University.

Coming from such a man, the assault on the Bar Kochba myth could hardly be brushed off with the contempt usually displayed by the extreme nationalists for their opponents. And their no-holds-barred response can largely be explained by the reputation that Harkabi acquired over the years as an army man, Arabist, and (one-time) "hawk."

In general terms, his work on Bar Kochba simply opens up one more front in the great debate that has divided Israel since the June War of 1967. The two sides have been loosely called "doves" and "hawks," but the terms nonannexationists or "minimalists" as opposed to annexationists or "maximalists" are probably more accurate descriptions. Broadly speaking, the one camp sees itself as working in the tradition of Ben Gurion, Chaim Weizmann, and the Haganah—the other in that of Jabotinsky, the Revisionists, the IZL (the "Irgun") and the Lehi ("the Stern Gang").

The basic question at issue throughout, of course, has been whether or not Israel should seek at the appropriate time to exchange territorial gains made in 1967—including the West Bank and Gaza in whole or in part—for a secure peace. For the one side, the dangers inherent in annexing a hostile Arab population (now almost half the size of the Jewish population), in turning a democratic and ethnically Jewish state into one at best only half democratic and half Jewish, and in recklessly deepening hatred and antagonisms within that state far outweigh the dangers involved in seeking to negotiate an eventual territorial compromise. For the other side, however, the idea of surrendering any area of the national homeland, of *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel), is unthinkable; ultimately—there is much talk among people on the right of a hundred-year war—peace will have to be imposed and secured by the consolidation of a Greater Israel too strong to be challenged.

Each side believes that it represents the Zionist revolution, and its opponents the counterrevolution. Zionism, argue the minimalists, means a secure and democratic state for the Jewish people living in peace within its homeland—not the sacrifice of the Jewish people for boundaries; not another Northern Ireland or Lebanon. But for the maximalists, this position is a loss of nerve, appeasement, a Munich. The maximalists thus see the goal of Zionism in the gathering-in of all the exiles from the four corners of the earth into the entire historic homeland; to surrender territory is to betray that goal: treason. The establishment of the state in 1948 and the subsequent six-fold increase in its Jewish population have, in this view, to be seen as mere stepping stones toward ultimate redemption. What is needed to overcome the objective hurdles is an iron will combined with belief in the providential destiny of the Jewish people, in the Rock of Israel.

Harkabi consequently uses the Bar Kochba epic in order to sharpen and clarify this ideological divide. His style is simple and blunt, his arguments are based on common sense and, as he is the first to admit, almost banal. All this is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deliberate. First, he wants at all cost to show that there is no middle ground between the two types of Zionism, that there is a fundamental choice to be made: either/or. And he insists that the moderate politicians in both political alignments (the Likud and, still more, Labor) must stop pretending that they can eat their cake and have it too. (One is reminded of Ben Gurion's first law of coalition-building, designed to draw clear lines: "Without Herut [Begin] and without the Communists!") And, second, Harkabi is desperately anxious to reach the man and woman in the street. He wants every Israeli to see that the Likud government is gambling with the highest stakes against insuperable odds, to understand that throughout history, when the leaders have made their last throw and lost, the people are left to pay the price in suffering and blood.

The case that Harkabi makes against the Bar Kochba uprising is far-ranging and touches on its causes, the tactics and strategy it adopted, its outcome, and the place it has occupied in Jewish thought over the centuries. With little hard fact to go on, both Harkabi and his critics have to work largely in the area of speculation and extrapolation. Much of the argument comes down to the question of whose guesswork is the more plausible. Ultimately, however, it is not the past but the present and the future that are at stake in this controversy.

There was never a chance worth considering, as Harkabi sees it, that the Bar Kochba revolt could have succeeded. Rome was the only world power of that period and its war machine was immensely powerful. True, it often suffered military defeat at its borders but time and again, when challenged, it proved able to muster sufficient force to preserve the Empire intact. The power of Rome was based in part on the superbly thorough training given to all officers and men, above all to the middle-ranking centurions who commanded the cohorts of about 600 men. The Roman army was thus capable of fighting effectively both en masse and when scattered over a wide area in small semiautonomous units. An extraordinary logistical infrastructure, developed over a period of centuries, backed the army in the field and permitted the systematic transfer of forces from one end of the Empire to the other. Thus Rome could shift military units from Germany, Britain, or Spain to Egypt, Anatolia, or Syria (or vice versa), as circumstances demanded. Add to these factors vast military experience and cold-blooded ruthlessness, and you have an all but unbeatable formula.

It was Bar Kochba's misfortune, argues Harkabi, that Palestine was not some peripheral outpost of the Empire (unlike Scotland, heartland Germany, or Parthia) but a key link in the network of defenses that preserved the Mediterranean as a Roman lake. Once challenged, Emperor Hadrian had no choice but to muster force sufficient to crush the revolt utterly. Roman losses were, it seems, unusually heavy. (Hadrian, according to Dio Cassius, was unable to inform the Senate of victory with the customary addendum: "I and the legions are in health.") The Twenty-Second Legion, rushed in from Egypt, was probably utterly destroyed; and Jerusalem may have been captured and held for a time by Bar Kochba. But these Judean victories at the tactical level were overcome by the overwhelming strategic advantage enjoyed by the Romans.

Only a general uprising throughout the Empire or the massive intervention by Parthia (consisting of Persia and Mesopotamia) could have staved off disaster. But neither of these eventualities was probable in 132 C.E.—apart from anything else, Hadrian had concluded a firm peace treaty with Parthia on becoming emperor in 117 C.E.—and neither in fact materialized.

Why then—and this is, perhaps, the crucial question—did the revolt take place at all? The sources are contradictory here, but there seem to have been one or two immediate causes (or perhaps both, together): the first, Hadrian's decision to build a Roman city, Aelia Capitolina, upon the ruins of Jerusalem, which had been destroyed in 70 C.E. during the First Revolt (as well as a temple for Jupiter on the Temple Mount); the second, the emperor's decree forbidding circumcision throughout the Empire. But, Harkabi insists, neither of these two decisions, however terrible and humiliating from the Jewish point of view, could have justified full-scale revolt.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is an axiom of the Jewish religion that martyrdom is considered obligatory only in order to avoid being coerced into idolatry, into sexual offenses, or into the commitment of murder. The Roman decrees, it seems, did not impose any of these three cardinal sins. And the ban on circumcision could hardly have been enforced except in the most haphazard way. There was usually no more than a single legion stationed on a permanent basis in Judea.

> Roman rule [as Harkabi puts it] did not maintain a totalitarian, bureaucratic control like that of twentieth-century regimes. . . . If the Jews could keep secret their vast preparations for the rebellion, they were certainly capable of avoiding public knowledge of circumcision rituals.

Again, over 60 years had passed since the destruction of the Temple and a radically new turn had been given to the practice and theory of Judaism by Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakkai and his school of thought. During the siege of Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E., he had slipped out of the city and, with Roman consent, had established an academy—a new spiritual center—in Yavneh. There, in effect, he and his colleagues set out to demonstrate that the Jewish people could survive indefinitely without the Temple, the priesthood and animal sacrifice, and build instead on the study of the Torah, the codification and explication of the Oral Law, the synagogue, the family, individual piety, and belief in the eventual messianic coming. To avoid military confrontation with Rome was considered of essential importance by Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakkai and by at least some of his colleagues and disciples. Among them was the distinguished Rabbi Joshua Ben Hananiah who, arguing against the idea of revolt, used the parable of a rooster who puts its beak into the mouth of a lion, and he concluded that "It is enough for us that we have come into contact with this [Roman] people in peace and were able to leave in peace." In sum, what the Romans chose to do with the Temple Mount, laid waste 60 years earlier, should hardly have been seen in 132 C.E. as a matter of national life or death.

Harkabi concludes that the revolt was profoundly irrational, caused in the last resort not by Roman decrees per se but by the belief that Bar Kochba was the Messiah. In all probability, it was this idea or similar concepts of imminent redemption and providential intervention that prompted the greatest rabbi of the age, Akiba, to give his backing to the revolt. And it was Rabbi Akiba's prestige that guaranteed Bar Kochba the general support of the population in Judea.

What turned unavoidable defeat into a tragedy of colossal proportions were the rebels' military tactics. Their scattered guerrilla warfare, skirmishes and raids, conducted from within the midst of the village population, made it well-nigh impossible for the enemy to distinguish between combatants and noncombatants. This made the Romans respond with a policy of ruthless attrition, mass extermination. As Dio Cassius put it:

> Very few of them [the Jews in Judea] in fact survived. Fifty of their most important outposts and nine hundred and eighty-five of their most famous villages were razed to the ground. Five hundred and eighty thousand men were slain . . . and the number of those that perished by famine, disease and fire was past finding out.

In rabbinic sources, the same picture was drawn more allegorically: "They slew the inhabitants until the horses waded in blood up to the nostrils." Or, again: "For seven years the gentiles fertilized their vineyards with the blood of Israel without using manure." Harkabi estimates the total number of deaths among the Jewish population at about a million.

That this revolt was not inevitable, even given the values and imperatives of the time, follows from the fact (this is a central strand in Harkabi's argument) that the Jews of Galilee and of the Diaspora—many millions—joined in hardly or not at all. As a result, Jewish life in Galilee survived intact, and so the work of salvaging Judaism from the wreckage could go forward. It was there that the Mishnah as well as the so-called Jerusalem Talmud were composed. Against "the common Israeli reaction that these Jews were insufficiently 'nationalistic,' " Harkabi argues that "the survival of the Jewish people is due to the moderation of the Jews in Galilee."

In reaction to the catastrophic defeats, rabbinic authorities turned sharply against the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

idea that political action of any kind could advance the messianic coming. They now described God as binding the Jews by an oath not to rebel and, by a second oath, not to return demonstratively, en masse—until the days of the Messiah—from exile to the Holy Land. (A third oath obliged the nations of the world not to oppress the Jews.)

Bar Kochba—even more than the leaders of the First Revolt—was transformed by the Sages of later periods into something of a "nonperson." He was rarely mentioned, and whatever references to him survived tended to be negative. Maimonides, for example, wrote that he "was killed because of his sinfulness." Rather than Bar Kochba (Son of a Star), he was now usually called Bar Koziba, which suggests deception or false hope. (From the Dead Sea letters, it is known today that his actual name was Bar Koziba.) It is interesting, as Harkabi stresses, that Sabbatai Zvi—the self-proclaimed Messiah of the 17th century who brought tragedy upon his generation—identified wholeheartedly with Bar Kochba. It was even suggested at the time by disciples that Bar Kochba's soul had been reincarnated in Sabbatai Zvi.

In sum, Harkabi is arguing that the Zionist enterprise, having rejected one form of spiritual excess, is in imminent danger of falling victim to another. In its early stages, the movement had to throw off the political passivity, the self-denying oaths characteristic of most rabbinic thought over the centuries (and still upheld in full by the ultra-Orthodox Neturei Karta and in part by Aguda). Zionism proclaimed the return of the Jewish people, as Harkabi puts it, to the stage of history. In other words, it was an anthropocentric idea, which demanded that the Jews treat the political process as autonomous, as the art of the possible. Thus the Zionist movement set itself the task of solving finite problems—most notably the problem of the homelessness and helplessness of the Jewish people, so sorely endangered by modern anti-Semitism—by finite, mundane means (Jewish statehood). Therein lay Zionism's revolutionary innovation within the scheme of Jewish thought.

But its success, so vastly impressive and rapid, achieved in the span of a few decades, has in turn produced a wave of irrationality so powerful that it threatens to sweep aside all realism, all caution, all sober thought. The pendulum has swung fast and far toward messianism, eschatology, and chiliasm in their myriad manifestations, religious, quasi-religious, and secular. Herut and Gush Emunim share with Sabbatai Zvi, Bar Kochba, and the Zealots of the First Revolt (this is Harkabi's case) the same refusal to recognize that some hurdles are too high to clear, some obstacles too stubborn to be brushed aside or wished away, that the external world indeed is real. It is touch and go whether Zionism can survive the effects of its own triumph.

The case marshaled in reply to Harkabi has been led primarily by Yisrael Eldad, who entitled his small book on the subject, published in Hebrew in 1982, *A Controversy: Our Perceptions on the Destruction of the Second Temple and of Bar Kochba's Revolt*. But many others joined the fray. Eldad's book contains a short essay that is highly critical of Harkabi by David Rokeah, who teaches Jewish history at the Hebrew University. (Despite popular perceptions, the Israeli academic world is by no means uniformly opposed to the Greater Israel camp.) Like Harkabi, Eldad is no closet intellectual. Together with Yitzhak Shamir (now Israel's prime minister), he was one of the leaders of Lehi (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, the so-called Stern Gang). He has long been known for his fierce polemical skills, both verbally and in print. Eldad employed those skills to attack the Camp David agreements and the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. Extremely erudite in both European and Jewish culture, he has been working for years on a multivolume Hebrew translation of Nietzsche, and he sees himself in many ways as a disciple of the Nietzschean philosophy. It is indicative of the swing to the right in Israel that over the last few years he has been writing a column for the liberal paper *Ha'aretz*, which thus hopes to demonstrate some semblance of "balance" (his role being rather like that of William Safire in the *New York Times*).

Many of the arguments put forward by Eldad and Rokeah are essentially technical

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and, beyond a certain point, primarily of interest to specialists. Was it possible, for example (as Harkabi suggests *en passant*), that the decree on circumcision did not cause the revolt but, instead (a Roman act of reprisal), resulted from it? Or, again, was it really so unrealistic to expect that the Parthians and other enemies of Rome would not let slip by so opportune a moment to join in the fight? Did the two Jewish revolts (of 66 and 132) serve, however incidentally, to frustrate the permanent Roman subjection of Parthia (thus in the long run permitting the rise of Babylonian Jewry to preeminent importance)?

In the last resort, though, Eldad's case rests on three major theses that are part of an entire value system. One can take that system of thought or leave it, but it is impervious to mere empiricism. First, Eldad insists that for any given movement to repudiate its own heroes is an act of spiritual self-mutilation. The questions of failure and cost can be analyzed, but it is essential nonetheless to identify with those who led the fight and died for the cause. Can one imagine any revolutionary socialist denouncing the leaders of the Paris Commune or the June Days? Beyond a certain point, it has to be taken on trust that those who raised the flag of revolt had no choice. In a profoundly religious age, the ban on circumcision alone must have appeared as a "red line," a point of no return, when death became a better choice than surrender.

To denounce those who had the courage to stand and fight means, consciously or unconsciously, to identify with the national enemy. Eldad accuses Harkabi of taking his stand not, as he would have it, with Yohanan Ben Zakkai but, by clear implication, with Josephus Flavius, who went over to the Romans during the First Revolt, and with others who chose to surrender rather than fight to the end. If it had not been for Rabbi Joshua Ben Hananiah and other overcautious leaders, the Jews of Judea might have joined the revolt of the Diaspora in 115–117 C.E., the combined forces ensuring victory at a moment when "the fate of the Roman Empire hung in the balance." The failure to rise up then was "one of the great tragedies in this struggle between Rome and Jerusalem."

The essential vulnerability of Harkabi's argument, as Eldad interprets it, lies in the distinction Harkabi makes between realism and fantasy. Everybody is, in principle, against futile risks and for sober calculation. But while this distinction comes easily with the benefit of hindsight, it is impossible to employ it with any confidence where the future is concerned. Harkabi does not attack the Maccabees, but was their uprising against the Seleucid Greeks anything but utterly Quixotic? And yet, they were finally victorious, hence justified. (Rokeah, arguing along the same lines, recalls that Isaiah had regarded the defense of Jerusalem against Assyria's King Sennacherib as hopeless, yet resistance proved justified when the plague, "a miracle," saved the city.)

For decades, the Zionist movement itself was denounced by its opponents as dangerous fantasy. And so it was from a "realistic"—meaning unimaginative—point of view.

> If [writes Eldad] one compares that reality [facing Bar Kochba] with the reality that faced us [the Zionists], then it turns out that the chances of success were far greater then than in our time, whether at the stage of pioneer Zionism . . . or of the uprising against the British Empire . . . or of the war between the small Yishuv [Jewish community in the Land of Israel] and the seven Arab states.

And yet, despite overwhelming odds, the Jewish state was established. To find the limits of what can be attained by courage and will it is essential to put reality to the test. (Applying this principle to recent events, Eldad denounces the hesitations that inhibited the expulsion of the Arab population from Hebron and Nablus in June 1967, a preventive strike on the eve of the Yom Kippur War, and a march on Cairo at its close "in order to dictate peace like any normal nation.")

This brings us to the final theme in Eldad's crescendo. Ultimately, he argues, the creation of the State of Israel cannot be grasped in mundane terms according to the familiar "lessons" of history. Harkabi may be right that it "is arrogance to think that historical processes affect all peoples except the Jews." But it was precisely this thought that inspired the Prophets and the Sages. Providence is clearly at work in our own days, and only the blind can ignore

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the fact. Yadin's discovery in the Dead Sea cave surpasses understanding, could hardly have been a coincidence.

> Thousands of years passed, hundreds of scholars have studied the subject, and is it not the finger of God that brought Bar Kochba's letters into Yadin's hands, the letters handed on as it were from Chief of Staff to Chief of Staff? . . . Is there any parallel to this in the history of the nations?

And if this was possible, why should it be considered fantastic to think in terms of 10 million Jews in the Holy Land settled "in accord with the faith of the Sages from the Euphrates to the Nile?"

At this point, it is perhaps superfluous to review the countertheses that can be marshaled in response. In detail, Eldad's argument is often highly vulnerable. (To take just one instance. There are no grounds for describing the Zionist movement from 1881 until 1948 as a wildly utopian enterprise. It was still an era of European colonization overseas. Millions of Jews were hoping to leave Europe; the countries that had been accepting immigrants were beginning to close their gates; and Palestine was very thinly populated, at least until 1917.) In toto, his statement does have a kind of monolithic grandeur, a *Sturm und Drang* quality, which gives it aesthetic appeal. Yet, as an operative doctrine it seems a sure prescription for disaster.

Let Harkabi have the last word on the issue of the Second Revolt:

> The Jewish tradition requires Jews to see anything significant that has happened to our people as though we share it directly. . . . Let all Jews . . . attempt to sense the nightmare visited upon the Jewish population. . . . Are we so stone deaf that we cannot hear their shrieks? Did they not in their agony revile Bar Kochba and the revolt?

If there is an important weakness in Harkabi's approach it is not that he is wrong to subject the national heroes of the past and the national fantasies of the present to critical scrutiny. On the contrary, Sharon's appointment as minister of defense in 1981 and his rush to transform the Middle East by war provided Harkabi's analysis with immediate and shocking confirmation. It is, rather, that he appears to underestimate the true dimensions of the problem, assuming that a few doses of sharp ideological shock treatment can restore the collective psyche to a state of equilibrium, thereby reversing what he rightly discerns as "the primitivization of political thinking among a large section of the Jewish population [in Israel]."

The fact is, though, that every movement of mass mobilization requires the energizing and unifying force supplied by myth. Would it have been possible to sustain the total effort in the two World Wars without demonizing the enemy and idealizing the coming era of peace? Could revolutionary socialism have sustained itself throughout its long periods in the underground without its utopian vision of the future (and usually of the distant past), or without its black-and-white theory of class war?

This rule applies, above all, to nationalism. Even the long-established national states proved unable to dispense with their heroes, not men but supermen. Bonaparte was, of course, the classic case—a myth that proved impervious to the defeats of Napoleon I and brought on new disasters with Napoleon III. England experienced nothing quite like this but had, rather, an entire Pantheon of minor heroes: admirals, generals, and other warriors. (The visitor to the Thames Embankment will even find that imperial England built a statue of Queen Boadicea riding into battle—and to eventual defeat—in her war chariot.)

As for those national movements that had to struggle hard for statehood, they not only required myth; they were to a great extent its product. Is it possible to conceive of Italian or Greek nationalism divorced from the largely unsubstantiated theories of continuity between the modern and the classical age? Or can one imagine the German nationalist movement without the idealization of the Teutonic resistance to Rome and of the Hohenstaufen? Or Polish nationalism without Gniezno, Jagiello, and Grunwald?

And certainly, Zionism too had its myths, for it was dedicated to the restoration of the ancient homeland and it rejected, at crucial moments of decision, the offer of alternate territories (most notably, Uganda). Bar Kochba, along with Shimon Bar Giora and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other leaders of the revolts against Rome, served to symbolize (as Eldad rightly notes) the idea of national liberation and total dedication to that idea. They were held up as the antithesis of rabbinic passivity, the answer to Yohanan Ben Zakkai and the tradition of his academy at Yavneh—precisely because they died fighting for national liberation. There were Bar Kochba sports associations, and Bar Kochba clubs (the one in Prague was frequently addressed by Martin Buber). The first paramilitary underground group, founded in 1907 in Palestine by members of the Marxist-Zionist youth groups (among them Isaac Ben-Zvi), was called Bar Giora. Its slogan read: "In blood and fire Judea did fall; in blood and fire Judea shall rise."

To discount this entire phenomenon, as Harkabi does at one point, as belonging primarily to "the literary realm" in the preindependence period is to miss a fundamental truth: the central role played by myth in the radical movements of the modern age.

It is only with victory, the end of the war, the seizure of power, the establishment of the national state, that the dialectical nature of myth reveals itself in all its force. How could the statesmen at Versailles lay the groundwork of "peace in our time," to which they had dedicated themselves, when Germany also had to be treated as a satanic realm? How could the Bolsheviks (or the Maoists) ensure a measure of popular well-being and participation ("Soviet democracy") so long as the class enemy had not been totally extirpated and full communism attained? How could the new national states conduct policy based on a rational alliance system abroad and on ethnic homogeneity at home, when true greatness meant the attainment of the "historic" (meaning the maximal) frontiers? Having contributed to the attainment of victory, myth tends to make its consolidation impossible. Like some Golem it turns on those who used it, threatening to destroy what it had initially helped to build.

Fortunate the rare state or regime that had founders who were aware of this danger at the moment of its establishment. In the case of Israel, the legacy left by the leadership of 1948 was highly ambiguous, Janus-faced. At the practical level, Ben Gurion brilliantly combined daring with caution, acceptable risk with underlying realism. He attended to building an adequate military force both before and after 1948; but he never overestimated what a small country could obtain (politically, diplomatically, socially) through sheer might. He constantly pursued a policy of partition, leaving Jordan and Egypt to deal with the vast majority of the Palestinian Arabs. Under his leadership, Israel was a democratic state with a decisive Jewish majority, and the area assigned for new settlement was, above all, the unpopulated South (Lachish and the Negev).

But Ben Gurion combined this wisdom in practice with an uncritical myth-mongering, in no way modified by the establishment of the state. He persisted in the idea that Zionism meant the ingathering of all the exiles, not in some messianic future but as a real possibility. And his "negation of the Diaspora [*galut*]" was also applied retroactively across the span of Jewish history. The 2,000 years of exile were denied legitimacy, real value. The goal was "back to the Bible," back to the period of Jewish sovereignty, and the creation of a new nation freed of the passivity, dependency, and powerlessness of the Diaspora.

For all his political genius, there was an unmistakable strand of primitive ativism in Ben Gurion. Yadin recalls how the Prime Minister responded on finding out that not all the newly discovered Bar Kochba letters were in the language of the Bible: "'Why did they write in Aramaic and not in Hebrew?' was his immediate angry reaction, as if the scribes had been members of his staff." Eager to advance the formation of the "new Jew," he threw all his prestige behind Moshe Dayan as his heir-apparent. Dayan was a man of quick intelligence and bold imagination, but he lacked entirely what Ben Gurion had in such abundance—a steady and large vision of the state and society, which still had to be built. The "pragmatism" on which Dayan so prided himself meant in fact the absence of all fixed principle, a change of line with every new wind and whim. Ben Gurion himself, every inch the statesman, let myth blind him when it came to planning the succession.

The same syndrome seems to have been at work when it came to laying down the guidelines for the educational system of the emer-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gent state. Ben Gurion invested enormous effort to ensure the creation of a near-unified school system, excluding the religious schools but incorporating (and so abolishing) the network of labor education that had been developed in the prestate days. But neither he nor anyone else among the founders seems to have given much thought to the problem of how their values could be incorporated into what is being taught.

There is an extraordinary amount of time given over to the Bible, which is taught to the children a few days a week throughout 11 years of their schooling. That the Bible per se, when not measured against some external yardstick, can be mined to justify every religious or political doctrine (including almost any form of fanaticism) is obvious enough and has long been demonstrated by the never-ending history of Protestant schism and sectarianism.

Nonetheless, the Labor leadership, whose members had received a many-sided education (part Marxist and part social democratic, Jewish and European, Hebraic and English), made no concerted effort to ensure that something approaching this kind of balance would be maintained in the schools. On the contrary, in its eagerness to produce a rooted, uncomplicated, "normal" youth, the leadership may have deliberately (albeit unconsciously) rejected such a balance. Certainly, very little time in Israeli schools is devoted to the study of the democratic system and the history of democracy, or to the Israeli declaration of independence. There is no concerted effort to depict modern Israel for what it is (but may not be much longer): the product of Jewish history in both ancient Palestine and in the Diaspora, of both national tradition and Western modernity, of both the rebellion against Greece and Rome and of the Graeco-Roman civilization.

The antiannexationist camp has, to a striking extent, drawn its support from groups and individuals who have either grown up outside Israel altogether (Abba Eban, Ben Aharon) or who have drawn inspiration from sources beyond mainstream patriotism. Mapam with its strong Marxist tradition, writers with an acute awareness of the multifarious roots of Israeli life (Amos Oz, A. B. Yehoshua), faculty members and students at the universities with close intellectual links to the West—all demonstrate, in their different ways, this truth.

For the most part, though, the Israeli leadership and people have found themselves increasingly unable to handle the problem of the territories conquered in 1967. Such people as Yigal Allon, Moshe Dayan, and Shimon Peres —the successor generation—clearly lacked the intellectual and moral tools to make the necessary and hard choices that were, and are, demanded. In this context, it is interesting to note that Yigael Yadin rejected Harkabi's critique of Bar Kochba out of hand (and with various *ad hominem* jibes) on the grounds that too little is known about Bar Kochba. The potential dangers of nationalistic mythology (which Yadin himself fosters, however unintentionally, through his books on archeology) have apparently never occurred to him. Theoretically a moderate on the issue of the territories, Yadin was nevertheless ready to serve some four years as deputy prime minister under Begin.

The "primitivization" of political thinking, against which Harkabi warns, is not the product of the Begin years, even though the Likud has built on it, fosters it, and may well perpetuate it. Nor can it be blamed only on the difficulties of educating a Jewish population of which about half has come from the Arab world, although that too is a factor. A return to the primitive was part of the *ur*-myth of the new society—a phenomenon that finds expression in the fact that Joshua and King David are more meaningful symbols to most of the Israeli-born population than not only John Stuart Mill or de Tocqueville, not only Zionism's Ahad Ha-Am or A. D. Gordon, but even Chaim Weizmann and, with the passing years, even David Ben Gurion.

If Labor does come back to power in the next year or two, which is now more than possible but less than probable, it should ensure before all else that it takes over the Ministry of Education. It is high time to weaken the hold of mysticism and myth. Labor is unlikely to have another chance. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Juan E. Corradi

Two Cheers (and a Prayer) for Argentine Democracy

Over the past 30 years, Argentina has gone through four political phases in a downward spiral. Between Perón's ouster in 1955 and 1966 it had an unstable and exclusionary democracy, interrupted by military coups. The Peronists were proscribed; elections were devious; and the governments had largely fictitious mandates. In 1966 the military suspended politics indefinitely, supposedly to spur development. The ensuing social tensions brought down the regime in 1972. The task of defusing the explosive mix fell on Perón, winner of free elections in 1973—18 years after he had been deposed. But Perón could not tame the forces that had brought him back to power: the unions, the masses, the radicalized middle sectors, and a revolutionary youth prone to terrorism. After his death, the country was in shambles.

The armed forces seized power again in 1976. Their dictatorship left a deplorable record of repression, economic mismanagement, and military incompetence. By a peculiar ruse of reason, the same arrogance of power that left many bereaved, others ashamed, and the majority poorer caused the ruin of the dictators. The South Atlantic war was an international tragedy of errors starring a full cast of right-wing actors. After the surrender at Port Stanley on June 14, 1982, the generals' days in power were numbered.

If the junta's self-destruction was unmistakable, the orderly passage to democracy was much less clear. Tyranny left a legacy of fear. The party system seemed battered. New political actors were not yet visible. Old ghosts were being revived. Argentines could look back only to a tradition of intolerance and opportunism. Many seemed kindled by the spirit of revenge. Under such sorry circumstances, democracy came to appear as an imperative, since other solutions had proved disastrous. Past mishaps made it seem, however, a choice by default.

The reasons for such despondency had deep roots in the past. Argentina developed haphazardly. The result was a juxtaposition of diverse pressure groups, conscious of their special interests but oblivious to the common good. Power accumulated outside institutions, in a sort of political black market from which it burst in wild actions and reactions. The ballot was only one weapon among many. The main political movement was undemocratic; the democratic parties did not command majorities; and the vacuum was filled by authoritarian minorities. The society was rarely governed by law. Life became a war of all against all, with pockets of order under strongmen waging vendettas against each other. The only way out of this jungle was a solemn democratic covenant. Whether Argentines would arrive at such a covenant was contingent on two factors: the balance of constraints and opportunities, and the formation of a new collective will.

What were the obstacles and opportunities for democracy when the political campaign started in mid-1983? Peronism still seemed the major political force. It had been both the vehicle for the organization of labor and a heterogeneous, charismatic movement. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Argentine working class was mature; but the labor organization was pyramidal, had a single political allegiance, and weighed massively on the political process. These were not insurmountable barriers to democracy. Nobody would make such claims about labor organizations in Sweden, Great Britain, or West Germany.

Why then had Peronism not become a social-democratic force? Partly because of three internal reasons: the domination of unions by authoritarian barons; the integration of labor and nonlabor sectors of Peronism, not into a modern party structure, but into a populist movement under a *Führerprinzip*; and a corporatist style of negotiation with other political and social forces. Changing these features would not be impossible, but it would be a project for the longer run, falling on a new generation of labor leaders and Peronist politicians.

Another answer lay outside of Peronism. Argentina has not had cohesive center and center-right parties as effective counterweights to the labor organizations. Since 1930, a fragmented Argentine establishment has lacked the will and imagination to organize itself for democratic politics. Faced with the Peronist onslaught, these groups have tended to secede from open politics and knock at the army barracks' door. Without a reconstituted political center, the unions and regiments would continue to act as surrogates of parties. Only if the political campaign revealed a strong political center, would democracy have a chance in Argentina.

As soon as elections were announced, the traditional political parties started a process of internal reorganization. Affiliation to the two major parties reached record proportions, indicating a strong thirst for involvement on the part of the population. The platforms and proposals of the major parties were not, however, substantially different. The difference was rather in the style, in the shifting involvements of such sectors as the middle-class youth, and in the emergence of a new and younger leader, the Radical Raúl Alfonsín.[1]

Under Alfonsín's leadership the old Radical party—a middle-class, middle-of-the-road mass party that had dominated the political scene from 1916 through 1930—turned the tables on the Peronists by projecting an image of change and renewal. Still, many observers doubted that this new momentum would suffice to overcome the long-standing handicaps of the Radicales.[2]

Before October 30, 1983, any Americans who took their news from the *New York Times* probably inferred that Argentine political habits had not changed—that Perón, dead, still continued to command the political destiny of Argentina. Jacobo Timerman said precisely that in an Op-Ed piece. To others who were watching the weekly polls from Buenos Aires, three trends suggested a more nuanced picture.

(1) For the first time in almost 40 years, the outcome at the polls was not a foregone conclusion. Since its irruption in 1946, Peronism had been the principal electoral force. Every time free elections were held, it had vindicated that title. This time, the polls showed a parity of strength between Peronism and the Radical party. The latter, under the leadership of Raúl Alfonsín, became a serious electoral alternative. This trend indicated that, even if the Peronists won, Argentines now would finally have surmounted a period of overwhelming Peronist domination.

(2) Almost ten years after Perón's death in 1974, its effects began to make themselves felt. The polls suggested that Peronism was losing the multiclass support that had accounted for its strength as a popular movement. Instead, it was becoming the political expression of a narrower though still important constituency, based on the organized working class. A sign of this change was the internal reorganization of the party, with union leaders seizing key positions, while reserving a symbolic place for the political cadres represented by the presidential

[1] Alfonsín was a dissenting voice within his party since 1966, when he first challenged the more traditional, "national" line of the older Radical leader Balbin. Balbin had kept control of the party until his death in 1981, after which Alfonsín rapidly stepped in.

[2] In the two presidential elections of 1973, the Radicals had obtained 21.3 percent and 24.4 percent of the votes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

candidate Italo Luder. Therefore, one could conclude that a more labor-centered Peronism might not be credible enough to present itself, as it had done, as the embodiment of the Argentine nation.

(3) The sense that a traditional political mold was about to break was confirmed by the election campaign. Despite the relatively peaceful Peronist reorganization, there were strong tensions within that party. The union leaders preferred an aggressive campaign, but their candidate Luder tried to project an image of order and civility, hoping to dispel the memories of the Peronists' disastrous performance in power under Isabel Perón. Luder wanted to draw votes from the middle sectors, without which he could hardly win. This search for respectability, which was not shared by noisier populist sectors of the party, seemed in line with the trend that was pushing Peronism into becoming just another, albeit still important, political force. The campaign showed that the political initiative had shifted.

IN SUM, far from being a new rendition of the past, the situation in Argentina now seemed close to a major political change. And this seemed reason enough to sound a note of cautious optimism: it was possible to begin thinking of an end to a 40-year cycle of disruption and despair. To be sure, the election outcome would not dissipate the pressing problems facing the country: the need to refinance a staggering foreign debt, the legal and moral imperative to account for the fate of thousands of *desaparecidos*, the necessity to institute civilian control over the army, the challenge to find an honorable solution to pending international conflicts. But it seemed that a condition for tackling these problems was to recreate democratic conviviality in a country that had long suffered from its absence.

In the presidential race, Alfonsín won by the unprecedented margin (for a party other than the Peronist) of 52 percent. Such a feat was made possible by the maintenance of the traditional middle-class Radical constituency,[3] by a massive swing of undecided voters in Alfonsín's favor, by a significant portion of "borrowed" voters from the right and center-right, and last but not least, by a good number of Peronistas deciding not to vote for their party this time. In all likelihood, it was the switch in allegiance of this last group that produced such a pronounced difference in favor of Alfonsín.

These considerations fail to capture the intense sense of relief that the outcome of the elections has produced in Argentina's collective consciousness. The exercise of formal democracy no longer meant repeating a feared and tattered script. For many a month of shame and bitterness after the defeat in the South Atlantic war, with the sudden realization that the country was near bankruptcy, and the slower awakening to the crimes and corruption of the military leaders, Argentines felt condemned—not destined—to democracy, largely because they could not see it as anything but a new turn of past failures. As the campaign gathered momentum, however, many acted against this dark self-understanding and broke the spell.

Until it looked at itself in the mirror of elections, the new majority had thought it was a minority. Thus the elections represent not only a reconstitution of political forces in terms more favorable to democratic politics but a profound symbolic break with the past. What makes an event stand out in the history of a community is the realization—by the actors and after the fact—that they have crossed an invisible threshold. It is difficult to say if this is a temporary or a permanent shift in Argentine politics. It is, at the least, an important occasion.

PERONISM WILL NOT VANISH.[4] In all likelihood, it will survive the recent debacle, but with clearer and more restricted boundaries. Barring a dramatic reorganization, it may in fact become a traditional ethnopolitical subculture.

---

[3] Here too there was an important break with the past: the middle-class youth, which ten years ago became radicalized and which, inspired by rather shoddy and violent revolutionary utopias, rallied around Peronism, this time endorsed the moderate and legalistic platform of the Radicales. There has been a profound transvaluation of values in this strategic sector of society.

[4] Despite deep rifts, prudence has counseled Peronist bosses against open bickering and self-reexamination, lest the party weaken itself further.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some Peronists who banked, in the past, on the almost automatic capacity of their movement to win elections, will now seek other watering holes.

But a hard core will endure, impervious to change. Like the French workers who remain loyal to the Communists—despite Poland, the Gulag, and "democratic centralism"—there are popular sectors in Argentina that will continue to tolerate the vices of Peronism, that will feel represented by populist and authoritarian leaders, and that will even see in the abhorrence of union bossism among democratic and progressive sectors (an attitude sometimes blending easily with middle- and upper-class prejudice) a confirmation of their proletarian authenticity. A popular subculture fed by an undercurrent of resentment will remain an important component of Peronism, just as Peronists will remain a dominant political force in the backward provinces of our vast, uneven country.

While Peronists seek, with difficulty, to adapt to the new situation, the Radical party will also be tested in the months ahead. Peronists argue that at least they have a reliable political base, whereas Alfonsín has gathered around him a disparate constituency. They have a point. President Alfonsín will have a hard time satisfying the crisscrossing demands of a motley alliance. The 52 percent of the vote that swept him into office may dwindle as he governs. Many who cast their vote for him did it in repudiation of the Peronists, not out of confidence in Alfonsín. His chances seem to lie in following the strategy that he successfully pursued as a candidate, which consisted of raiding the margins of Peronism. He may then lure into his fold an important bloc of skilled workers who still voted Peronist. He can do so only through an active policy of social reforms. Despite the severe constraints imposed by the economic crisis, a judicious reactivation of the productive apparatus and antidepression measures may transform a plebiscitarian event into a durable coalition.

The bloc of votes (19 percent) that in the national elections of 1973—the last before the military interregnum—went to right-wing candidates, was cast in 1983 in favor of Alfonsín. In the parliamentary elections of 1985, this bloc will again range itself behind its natural candidates. The Radicales will have to counteract this centrifugal trend by a stiff competition with the Peronists for the white-collar and skilled blue-collar vote. The political future of the Radical party and the country may, to a considerable extent, depend on that effort.

Meanwhile the Alfonsín administration has the opportunity to enforce and guarantee a truly democratic covenant, based on the new president's conviction that Argentina needs political craftsmen, not officers or technocrats, at the helm. The first order of business will be to create a system of government that can do justice to a complex society. It is a process to be attacked piecemeal. The risks are many. But in the end, Argentina may well contemplate these pleasing prospects: the taming and containment of authoritarian populism; a more balanced political party system; a greater role for skilled political brokers in various parties; a diversification of working-class, middle- and upper-class political preferences; and the appearance of a new democratic left.

As of this writing, a first decisive step has been taken: the military has been forced to surrender power and internal security functions to civilian control. It will have to submit next to the political justice of the constitutional regime. An independent judiciary, transpartisan commissions, and religious leaders have been given a large role as custodians of civil society.

All parties seem to agree on common norms of behavior for the sake of political stability. The rallying cry of "one nation, under law" is steadily replacing the catchwords of nostalgia and revenge. For the first time in decades these images of civility seem credible. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mark J. Osiel and Eliza Willis

Is Chile Headed for a Showdown?

Santiago, Chile

One striking image haunts the memory of those who witnessed the military coup that toppled Chilean President Salvador Allende in September 1973: the bombing of the Presidential Palace and its futile defense by a handful of aides and Allende himself. So ended the life of the only professed Marxist to be elected president of a Latin American nation. And so ended what had hitherto been the region's most stable democracy. The present-day visitor to Santiago who is escorted around the Presidential Palace might not guess that it had so recently been reduced to near-rubble by Chile's armed forces, whose commander-in-chief now occupies its spacious quarters. But on closer inspection the majestic facade reveals signs of that recent past. Beneath the smooth, fresh coats of paint one discerns the rough surfaces of bullet holes that have been plastered over.

As with palaces, so with presidents. The facade of public order and political quiescence projected by General Augusto Pinochet collapsed last spring in a wave of protests that brought hundreds of thousands of Chileans into the streets. In May, the first major public gatherings were organized by union leaders. As the protests grew, the political parties assumed a larger role. By August, police fired on the marchers. Since then the number of marchers has diminished, particularly among middle-class participants, and the police have dispersed most attempts at public gathering. Their violent forays into "troublesome" neighborhoods along the outskirts of Santiago made clear the limits of tolerated protest.

At the height of the demonstrations, General Pinochet authorized Interior Minister Sergio Onofre Jarpa to begin negotiations with the major organization of the opposition, the Alianza Democratica, a coalition of five political parties from center-right to center-left. This led to hopes for compromise, which reduced the attractiveness of confrontational methods for many citizens, and the demonstrations declined.

The Alianza made three demands in the negotiations: (1) the dissolution of the Central Nacional de Información, the secret police responsible for torture and disappearances; (2) the resignation of President Pinochet; (3) the convocation of a provisional government, and a constituent assembly that is to write a new constitution and schedule prompt elections.

It quickly became evident to the Alianza's leaders, whose dominant force is the Christian Democratic party, that Minister Jarpa had not been empowered to give any ground. Indeed, the negotiations had only succeeded in dividing the opposition—between those who did and those who did not wish to negotiate—without yielding any liberalization. Rather than moderate their demands, the leaders of the Alianza chose to return to "social mobilization," an effort to bring Chilean society to a halt through sustained and recurring demonstrations—to culminate in the kind of national strike that proved successful in Argentina. But in the face

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of increased police violence and heightened economic insecurity, this strategy has made only moderate headway.

Even the U.S. State Department sees little chance that under current conditions Pinochet can last till 1989, the end of his term according to the 1980 Constitution. While sporadic demonstrations and arrests continue, a less viable but more significant drama is unfolding. The political parties of the pre-coup years are collecting themselves and, together with the Catholic Church and the reemergent labor movement, they seek to form a united front against Pinochet.

Who comprises the opposition and what are its strategies for winning a return to democracy? The political parties that have reappeared are essentially the ones that existed in the years preceding the coup, but a decade of fierce authoritarianism has decisively altered relations between them and the issues that divide them. Although there remains an ideological climate of mutual distrust impeding efforts at a unified opposition, there are some encouraging signs of reconciliation and widespread acknowledgment from all quarters of past mistakes.

Parties whose leaders were at each other's throats during Allende's presidency, such as the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, are now close colleagues in the Alianza. The coalition of Socialists and Communists, however, which formed the backbone of Allende's support in 1970, would now be unthinkable, because of the changes these parties underwent in the years of foreign exile and domestic repression. The Communist party, which prided itself for decades on its commitment to parliamentary methods and social moderation, has flirted since 1980 with the idea of "armed struggle" and has allied itself with a long-standing terrorist group, the MIR—the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria. Past disagreements between Communists and Socialists over whether Allende moved "too fast" or "too slow" are recognized by both as irrelevant today.

New questions, however, divide the Chilean opposition: (1) whether to employ selective violence against representatives of the regime or to keep exclusively to nonviolent resistance; (2) whether to include or exclude the Communists in the united front; (3) whether to negotiate for concessions from the government or to attempt to force it from office.

The Political Parties

THE FAILURE of the Unidad Popular government provoked a crisis of direction and purpose in the Socialist party, just as Allende's death produced a vacuum in its leadership. Persistent infighting, engendered by personal rivalry and ideological differences, split the party into numerous factions and grouplets, as many as 14 in 1979. Since 1981 an effort at reunification has narrowed the principal contenders to two.

- The first faction is a moderate, social-democratic wing led by Carlos Altamirano and Allende's former U.N. Ambassador Ricardo Lagos. These leaders have been influenced by the successes of the European Socialist parties (French, Spanish, Italian), with which they maintain close contacts. They reject "armed struggle" against Pinochet, believing that such a strategy will only heighten military and middle-class fears of social chaos, and so will harden the government against the possibility of handing back power to civilians. These Socialists are wary of any future electoral coalition with the CP but are prepared to accept the Communists into the Alianza against Pinochet. Whether to include the CP is the major point of contention between the Socialists and the Christian Democrats, the other important member of the Alianza. The latter are prepared to accept the legalization of the CP but fear that its inclusion in the front against Pinochet will only frighten military and middle-class elements away from the opposition.
- The second faction of the Socialist party is "revolutionary" and unreconstructed. Like the CP, with which it is allied, it views democratic institutions not as something of permanent value but of merely tactical merit. It differs from the CP not on the legitimacy of violent means in resisting Pinochet's rule but on the issue of formal ties with the Soviet bloc. Its exiled leader, Carlos Almeyda, nevertheless continues to reside in East Berlin. The first faction, the social democrats, has won over the middle-class intellectuals, while the second re-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tains considerable strength among workers and students. Without free elections, however, such conclusions rest on little more than informed speculation.[1]

The acrimonious relations between the two factions, and the history of sectarian fragmentation that preceded it, makes the restoration of unity in the SP unlikely. The party congress scheduled to meet in April will probably succeed only in making the split more public and, perhaps, final. It is anyone's guess which segment will win the right to wear the mantle of the Socialist party. Infighting among the Socialists has gravely weakened the party in its traditional trade-union base, where it has lost much ground (its leaders confess) to the Communists and Christian Democrats.

WHILE THE COMMUNIST PARTY has experienced no such internecine warfare, it has retained its unity at the expense of intellectual stagnation. Some of its leaders spent years in West European exile and many, like their Socialist counterparts, were influenced by changes there in leftist thought and practice. For the Socialists, this experience meant new independence from the Communists and the acceptance of a mixed economy; for the Communists, a new commitment to democratic values and a strident independence from Moscow. The response of the two Chilean parties to the ideas they were exposed to in exile indeed has been decidedly different. The recent European ideological currents have sowed dissension among Chile's Socialists as they sought to evaluate and, in part, assimilate the new ideas.

The Chilean Communists, by contrast, greeted the discordant notes of their exiled comrades as heresy, causing several departures from the party. Eurocommunist tendencies, always weak, by now have been thoroughly squashed. The religious analogy is irresistible: the Chilean Socialists, like Protestants, are founding sects that split into further sects, multiplying interminably; the Chilean Communists, like Catholics, impose a single dogma from above, notwithstanding occasional shifts in official interpretation.

The most significant shift in Communist analysis has been a qualified acceptance of violent tactics. This shift had two sources. It reflected in part the views of a new generation in the party—younger recruits skeptical that anything less than threat to life and limb could induce the military to leave power. In this regard, the success of armed insurrection in Nicaragua had deep repercussions within Chile's CP.

The fantasy of toppling Pinochet in a Sandinista-style uprising has taken hold of many younger people in the CP. But the shift in Communist analysis also reflects that peculiar understanding of history called the "immiseration" thesis: when things get worse for the proletariat, they are actually getting better. The impoverishment of the masses exacerbates social contradictions, and so advances the coming of the revolution. Conversely, since material betterment leads to *embourgeoisement*, it also leads to the weakening of class consciousness. Such views are, of course, now considered antiquated and foolish among serious Marxists in the developed countries, but they are still the stock-in-trade of the cut-rate Marxism that prospers in the Third World.

In 1980, when the Chilean Communists adopted their new line, the national economy stood at the peak of a sustained boom. Untaxed imports and easy credit, facilitated by foreign loans, produced an orgy in consumer spending that extended to the general population. Fearing that the masses would begin to support the regime, the CP lost confidence in the possibility of mass opposition to Pinochet. Yet despite its new willingness to entertain the possibility of violence (if one can speak so delicately of so indelicate a matter), the CP has not claimed responsibility for any of the frequent terrorist acts in recent years. Neither has it dissociated itself, however, from unpopular killings of public officials committed by its ally, the MIR. Privately, some party officials express reservations about the wisdom of certain assassina-

[1] Foreign exile contributed to factionalism by creating two separate leaderships: an official, foreign one and a *de facto* domestic one. This factionalism extends beyond the boundaries of the SP to several other splinter groups, such as the Convergencia Socialista and the Bloque Socialista, which would have to be added in a more detailed account, as well as innumerable small parties of the left, right, and center.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions. The CP appears to prefer acts of violence against property rather than persons, such as the bombing of a power line last December that knocked out virtually the country's entire electrical system for a day.

The Communist leaders, moreover, suggest that their real emphasis is on organizational work in factories and poor neighborhoods. They also profess a desire for formal recognition by and alliance with the "bourgeois" opposition parties, although they have no strong interest in becoming members of the Alianza. The result is confusion concerning the party's strategy and heightened distrust in dealing with it.

The Communists now support the principle of armed struggle, which thoroughly antagonizes the other opposition parties, but show little enthusiasm for it in practice (though privately they distance themselves from their more violent allies). One consequence of this official stance has been to reduce the CP's credibility as a potential partner of the democratic opposition. The real purpose of the CP's professed acceptance of armed struggle may simply be to dissociate the party from opposition groups prepared to negotiate with the government, thereby removing it from any taint of collaboration with authoritarianism. The remotest suggestion of collaboration with Pinochet, the Communists believe, would be the kiss of death once democracy is restored.

The Communist party is undoubtedly a force to be reckoned with, for it commands between 10 and 20 percent of the population.[2] Its influence has probably increased during the years of harshest repression, when its militants were the most energetic force in reorganizing the unions and neighborhood associations. Unlike the Communist parties of Western Europe, Chile's CP has preserved an image of dynamism, and so has retained an appeal for many workers and students. A shift of focus from industrial workers to unemployed squatters has also helped to swell its ranks.

IN THIS CAMPAIGN for the hearts of the urban poor, the Communists' principal competitors are the Christian Democrats. The Christian Democratic parties of Latin America represent that holy grail for which U.S. foreign policy in the region has searched for so long and with such pitiable success: the "democratic center." Were it not for Reagan's warmth for Pinochet, it would probably be the Christian Democrats whom the United States would sponsor, as we did in the 1960s.

Chile's Christian Democrats have historically been the strongest of all such parties in the hemisphere, and the most genuinely committed to social reform. They have fared relatively well, compared to other opposition groups, during the decade of Pinochet's rule. Although their current status is only semilegal, their activities have not been subject to the same degree of suppression as those of the Socialists or the Communists. If they do not have as well-organized a network of militants in the poor neighborhoods, they have the considerable influence of an independent communications network. Their chief magazine, *Hoy*, and their radio station have offered the most reliable source of news to Chileans in recent years. This has enhanced their credibility and perhaps overcome the onus they have had to bear for supporting the 1973 coup.[3] The surreptitious support of the episcopate may count for a lot in the future—when and if democracy is restored—for the Church itself has won new resonance within Chilean society. Its steadfast opposition to Pinochet and its assistance to victims of human rights violations have given it new legitimacy.

Some Christian Democratic leaders, such as Andres Zaldivar and Genaro Arriagada, claim that the party represents the natural "center" of Chilean politics, capable of becoming the

[2] An estimate of Communist strength is tricky. But no knowledgeable observer ascribes to it less than 10 percent of the population. That can be significant in a multiparty system. The various politicians, union leaders, social scientists, and Western diplomatic observers we spoke with on our December visit offered differing estimates, varying from 10 to 20 percent. The relative strength of the various parties, including the Communist, has remained remarkably constant over long periods of time. On this, see Arturo and Samuel Valenzuela, "Partidos de Oposición Bajo El Régimen Autoritario Chileno," in *Chile, 1973–1983*, special issue of the *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 1983.

[3] The Christian Democratic leaders were evenly divided over whether or not to support the coup.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

decisive force by swinging its weight to left or right as fits the moment. But the party is divided between its left and right wings, albeit not as deeply as the Socialists. Its center of gravity lies considerably to the left of what Christian Democrats have come to symbolize in European politics. The Chilean CDP has a vocal and influential center-left, led by Gabriel Valdez, its president. As a result, perhaps, the party has failed to win over the industrialists and businessmen. These groups are hesitating at the moment—having withdrawn their public support from Pinochet but not aligned themselves with the opposition. A party congress, in April, is expected to witness a successful initiative from the right to take control, which in turn may help to win the wavering loyalties of the middle class. Its presence, and a more conservative CDP leadership, would create pressures for a return to the government's bargaining table. But for the moment the party is committed, in alliance with the moderate Socialists, to mobilizing the Chilean population in nationwide demonstrations against the regime. The party's moderates, however, fear that the rhetorical excess and inflammatory ideologizing of these gatherings foreshadow a polarization of the sort that occurred in the early '70s.

The dilemma is this: how to activate the entire population in open resistance to authoritarianism without rekindling the ideological fires that consumed democracy in 1973. Such fears are not without foundation. The Chilean party system of the last half-century represents the quintessential expression of what one political scientist has called "polarized pluralism": a politics in which the society's structure itself is up for grabs, and in which there is consequently little commitment by anyone to the intrinsic value of democratic procedure.[4]

THE PARTIES OF THE RIGHT also are beginning to reorganize, and they are in even greater disarray than those of the left or the center. The principal standard-bearer of the Chilean right before 1973 was the National party, which polled 23 percent in the last elections under Allende. After the coup, the party dissolved itself, viewing the military government as a near-perfect expression of its interests and ideals. Its leaders assumed prominent positions in Pinochet's government. With the limited liberalization of the last year, five new right-wing parties have been established. Their dissatisfactions with Pinochet have, in most cases, more to do with his disastrous economic policies than with any enthusiasm for a return to democracy. But they have lost all influence over economic policy to a handful of presidential advisers, the "Chicago Boys," and have come to believe that only a more democratic regime will prove responsive to their needs as businessmen. Their preoccupation is that such a democracy must prove compatible with maintaining (their) private property.

A regathering of the right as a single party could easily prove the decisive factor in inducing Pinochet to leave power. Such a party, as part of a center-right alliance including elements of the CDP, would make conservative policies electorally sustainable. It would thus make possible the kind of economic stability that even the government's "liberals," such as Interior Minister Jarpa, see as a precondition for transition to democracy.

This scenario, while attractive, faces obstacles that now seem insurmountable. It is virtually certain that the reorganization of the democratic right will continue in 1984, and that one or two party associations will emerge. But it will prove very difficult to cajole such a group (or groups) into joining the Alianza. There still is an intense fear on the right that the radicalization of the early '70s will recur. Some of this fear-mongering is nothing more than McCarthyism, Latin style.

Although this scenario has an apocalyptic strain, it is not without plausibility. Regardless of its probable inaccuracy, it will continue to influence the way many Chileans think and act. It goes as follows: (1) The Christian Democratic party will either be taken over by its right, whose leaders will be unelectable because of their complicity in the 1973 coup, or it will remain in the hands of its left, whose fuzzy-minded Christian "communitarianism" makes them susceptible to facile manipulations by the

[4] Giovanni Sartori, *Political Parties: Parties and Party Systems* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more clear-sighted CP. (2) The moderate Socialists will prove to represent only the middle-class intellectuals (that is, themselves), while the organizational base of the SP (to the extent that it still exists) will remain in the hands of its hard-line militants, already aligned with a staunchly pro-Soviet CP. Thus the two elements that appeared to make up a stable center will evaporate, and the CP will appear to Chileans as the only remaining political force untouched by association with the horrors of Pinochet's rule.

Fearing such a course of events, the democratic right is reluctant to sign up with the Alianza, which is courting it avidly, and thus to lend its name to favor Pinochet's immediate removal and prompt elections. The democratic right is staking its bets on the idea of renewed negotiations between Jarpa and elements of the democratic opposition, including themselves. Through such negotiations they hope to extract a series of constitutional amendments from the government, beginning with the legalization of the political parties (excepting the Communists). When it becomes clear that the new party system will include a stable center-right, another constitutional amendment from Pinochet would set a date for elections, presumably two to three years hence. There would be no possibility of "revenge" against (and justice for) those responsible for torture and disappearances.

Another obstacle to including the democratic right in a united front against Pinochet is disagreement on economic policy. If there is nearly unanimous hostility to the "Chicago Boys," there is little consensus on who or what should replace them. This lack of a clear economic alternative around which opposition groups might unite has been especially evident in a recent debate over the government's new mining law. The law permits foreign ownership of copper mines on terms highly favorable to the multinationals. Yet even the Alianza was unable to arrive at unanimity on opposing the measure.

A further economic question that divides the opposition concerns the fate of the private banks. Chilean bankers were recently bailed out by extensive loans from the government, after numerous failures of domestic businesses to which they had lent. The current debt of the private banks to the state is at several times their book value, making them nationalized in all but name. This enormous indebtedness to the state has greatly strengthened Pinochet's hold over the business community. Its fears of nationalization make it reluctant to criticize Pinochet or to identify itself with even the democratic right. Nor is there any agreement among the opposition parties over what to do about this debt, which is far more widely debated in Chile than even the foreign debt.

Is Pinochet Weakening?

THE FATE OF THE REGIME will be resolved, in the end, by nonеconomic factors: the willingness of the various parties—left, right, and center—to bury their ideological hatchets long enough to drive Pinochet from power. Their success will depend less on the GNP than on the imagination of their leaders, the capacity of individuals to transcend their ideological differences and partisan loyalties. Their capacity to do this will be the true test of whether they are any more committed to democracy than they were in 1973. On both the left and the right one can see hesitation concerning the willingness to associate with the other, despite the common adversary. So it appears unlikely that there will be a single opposition front or even a formal alliance between two blocs. But you can see some positive signs. There now exist extensive, informal contacts between most of the significant parties—between the democratic right and the moderate Socialists, the Christian Democrats and the Communists. These informal exchanges are quite an advance over the feverish distrust of recent years.

The United States, undoubtedly, can play a role in helping the opposition achieve its objectives. The threat by the AFL–CIO of a possible boycott of Chilean imports was enough to force Pinochet into allowing the passage of a labor law in 1979 that legalized the organization of unions and wage-bargaining, albeit under far from ideal conditions. And Senator Kennedy soon will introduce a proposal to cut all remaining U.S. credits to the Chilean government, except for aid that is unambiguously humani-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tarian. Such a move could end credits for Pinochet from the Export-Import Bank and U.S. funds channeled to him through the Inter-American Development Bank. These cuts would put pressure on Pinochet less in terms of economic impact than of symbolic support for the democratic opposition. Considering our role in putting the present Chilean government in power, this is the least we might do to displace it.

Actually, the Reagan administration has tried hard not to anger General Pinochet. When the U.S. restored to Argentina the right to purchase U.S. arms, the Chilean government was very concerned that this might encourage President Raúl Alfonsín to settle by force Argentina's dispute with Chile over the Beagle Canal. Reagan quickly sent General Vernon Walters to reassure Pinochet that the U.S. would not permit an imbalance in military power to develop between Pinochet's Chile and democratic Argentina.

The foreign visitor is struck by the extent to which Chile's leaders argue—and dream—about their country's political future by way of analogy to events elsewhere.

• The Chilean right dreams of emulating Brazil: hoping for a lengthy process of gradual liberalization during which (literal and figurative) wounds have time to heal and each concession to democracy can be controlled. Yet in Brazil it is the military, as an institution, that rules—not the person of the president. This facilitates a predictable succession, empowering new presidents every four years. But Pinochet is no faceless official atop a bureaucratic authoritarian regime. He is an old-fashioned, personal tyrant, and all other generals are his subjects. Hence there are no generals or admirals known to be "softer" than the Generalísimo. When he goes, the whole deck of cards may fall. Moreover Chile, unlike Brazil, has a strong Communist party that won't just disappear.

• The far left, with its talk of "armed struggle," dreams of repeating the experience of Nicaragua: an uprising of the entire society, aided by a paramilitary group, against an isolated, tottering dictator—a movement founded on widely shared feelings, but quickly captured by those with the guns. This scenario ignores all the features that made Somoza's ouster unique, principally his clumsiness in dealing with the business community and the weakening of U.S. support. Neither factor characterizes today's conditions in Chile.

• The center and center-left long to relive the experience of Spain or Argentina: a rapid transition from authoritarianism to democracy that avoids a polarization into uncompromising ideological camps. Of these three pipe dreams, this surely is the most attractive. But in Spain the success of this path was bolstered by the integrity of its constitutional monarch, who could provide a stable point of legitimacy in a highly unstable period. Chile would have no stand-in for Juan Carlos. The political instability that plagued Chile in the early 1970s had sources easy to identify but hard to change. For example, the direct ties between its labor unions and political parties, unusual in Latin America, ensured that disputes between parties over their world views had wide repercussions at lower levels. The union leaders of today's new generation, such people as Rodolfo Seguel and Manuel Bustos, are highly critical of the disruptions these ties caused within the labor movement and anxious to assert their independence from the parties.

In Argentina, the rapid transition to democracy was sparked by a humiliating defeat in a war, which fostered widespread revulsion against those who were responsible and united the entire population in a general strike. The willingness of the Argentine generals to hand power to Alfonsín, moreover, reflected the fact that only the Peronists had been discredited by the earlier experiences with democracy. In Chile, it was the entire political class, including the Christian Democrats, that became the target of military repugnance. Chile, in short, has no easy equivalent of Alfonsín's pristine Union Cívica Radical.

IF CHILE, LIKE ALL COUNTRIES, is unique, so are its opportunities. While the rulers of other authoritarian states have sought to get rooted in the society, cultivating groups for support, Pinochet's regime is weakly "institutional-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ized." He has not established organizations that would support his continued rule.

Chile stands in clear contrast here to Brazil, whose military rulers have gone to great lengths to sponsor progovernment unions and neighborhood associations in poor areas, providing them with resources to reward those who will follow their lead. Because Chile's opposition parties encounter no such competition, the Christian Democrats and the Communists have been able to become the predominant forces in the labor movement and neighborhood associations. Yet Pinochet's efforts to repress any organization standing between the state and the individual have made such activities perilous. Therefore, today fewer than 10 percent of Chile's workers are union members.

The continuing divisions within and between the parties of the democratic opposition, the CP's enduring strength, and the wild card of the terrorists (who are unlikely to put away their guns with the restoration of democracy) continue to present enormous problems. These problems have prevented the emergence of an alternative to Pinochet viable enough to win over a decisive majority of Chileans. In the absence of such an alternative, there is little reason for optimism about chances for a hasty exit of the Generalíssimo. Today there doesn't exist anything approaching the degree of unity necessary to make Chilean society "ungovernable" for Pinochet—unity within the leadership of the parties or within Chilean society itself. Were such unity among politicians and citizens miraculously to appear, there still would remain another major difficulty. The officer corps has not been visibly shaken by the mass demonstrations of recent months. Its members seem to stand even more firmly behind Pinochet than before. For this year, at least, the general will in all likelihood continue to enjoy the comforts of his refurbished palace. □

Meet *DISSENT* editors and authors, among others, at:

The second SOCIALIST SCHOLARS CONFERENCE 1984
April 19 (evening) 20 and 21 all day

"THE ENCOUNTER WITH AMERICA"

***Borough of Manhattan Community College*, Chambers and West Streets, New York City.**

Five plenaries, over forty panels, and at least two parties . . . with visitors from Latin America, Europe and Canada; theorists, writers, and activists from the labor, peace, and feminist movements; organized and unorganized socialists, and those willing to discuss and argue socialist and progressive politics and their relationship to the United States. . . .

Pre-Registration: $15 and $5 (low income and students)
$18 and $7 at the door.
Make out checks to: Socialist Scholars Conference 1984.
Mail to: Room 901, City University of New York Graduate School
33 West 42nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.

Sponsored by: The PhD Program In Sociology CUNY, Institute for Democratic Socialism, *Social Text*, *Social Policy*, *Socialist Review*, *Democratic Socialist*, Graduate Student and Faculty Clubs CUNY, etc.

For Information write to: Professor Bogdan Denitch at above address.
Or phone (212) 790-4320.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Benjamin R. Barber

Political Talk — and "Strong Democracy"

"Strong democracy" is an approach to politics that emphasizes participation and community. It reflects a conviction that representative institutions have done as much to undermine as to undergird democratic practice, and that our problem today is that we have too little rather than too much democracy.

One way to grasp the difference between instrumental or "thin" theories of democracy and what I call strong democracy is to look at the role of talk in democratic politics. For talk is at the heart of strong democracy, whereas it is peripheral in representative democracy—at least for the citizenry.

Talk has been central to the Western idea of politics since Aristotle identified *logos* as the peculiarly social faculty that divides the human species from animals. But as talk became a synonym for politics, its meanings became as multifarious as those of politics. Modern democratic liberals certainly maintain the close identity of politics and talk, but they do so by reducing talk to the dimensions of their smallish politics and turning it into an instrument of symbolic exchange between avaricious but prudent beasts. "Descartes, Locke, and Newton took away the world," laments Yeats in his *Explorations*, "and gave us its excrement instead." Hobbes, Bentham, and Laswell take away talk and give us instead noise: animal expletives meant to signify bargaining positions in a world of base competition. Yet talk remains central, for politics would ossify completely without its creativity, its variety, its openness and flexibility, its inventiveness, its capacity for discovery, its subtlety and complexity, its eloquence, its potential for empathy and affective expression, and its deeply paradoxical character that displays our full nature as purposive, interdependent, and active beings.

To START, I want to make three general observations. First, strong democratic talk entails listening no less than speaking; second, it is affective as well as cognitive; and third, its intentionalism draws it out of the domain of pure reflection into the world of action.

In considering the liberal idea of democracy as the politics of interest, one finds it easy enough to see how talk might be confused with speech and speech reduced to the articulation of interest by appropriate signs. Yet talk as communication obviously involves receiving as well as expressing, hearing as well as speaking, and empathizing as well as uttering. The reduction of talk to speech has unfortunately inspired political institutions that foster the articulation of interests but that slight the difficult art of listening. It is far easier for representatives to speak for us than to listen for us (we do not send representatives to concerts or lectures), so that in a predominantly representative system the speaking function is enhanced while the listening function is diminished. The secret ballot allows the voter to express himself but not to be influenced by others or to account for his private choices in a public language. The Anglo-American adversary system, expressed in legislative politics, in the judicial system, and even in the separation of powers into contending branches, also puts a premium on speaking and a penalty on listen-

---

Adapted from *Strong Democracy* by Benjamin Barber. To be published by the University of California Press.
Copyright © 1984 by the Regents of the University of California.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing. The aim in adversarial proceedings is to prevail—to score verbal points. In fact, speech in adversary systems is a form of aggression, simply one more variety of power. It is the war of all against all carried on by other means.

THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS of self-legislation that characterizes strong democracy attempts to balance adversary politics by nourishing the art of listening. "I will listen" means to the strong democrat not that I will scan my adversary's position for weaknesses and potential trade-offs, nor even that I will tolerantly permit him to say whatever he chooses. It means, rather, "I will put myself in his place, I will try to understand, I will strain to hear what makes us alike."

Good listeners may turn out to be bad lawyers, but they make adept citizens and excellent neighbors. Liberal democrats tend to value speech, and are thus concerned with formal equality. Listeners, on the other hand, feel that an emphasis on speech enhances natural inequalities in individuals' abilities to speak with clarity, eloquence, logic, and rhetoric. Listening is a mutualistic art that by its very practice enhances equality. The empathetic listener becomes more like his interlocutor as the two bridge the differences between them by conversation and understanding. Indeed, one measure of healthy political talk is the amount of *silence* it encourages, for silence is the precious medium in which reflection is nurtured and empathy can grow. Without it, there is only the babble of raucous interests and insistent rights vying for the deaf ears of impatient adversaries. The very idea of rights—the right to speak, the right to get on the record, the right to be heard—precludes silence. The Quaker meeting carries a message for democrats, but they are often too busy articulating their interests to hear it.

A SECOND MAJOR REQUIREMENT of talk in a strong democracy is that it encompass the affective as well as the cognitive mode. Philosophers and legal theorists have been particularly guilty of overrationalizing talk in their futile quest for a perfectly rational world mediated by perfectly rational forms of speech. They are forever trying to domesticate unruly words with the discipline of logic, trying to imprison speech in reason, trying to get talk not merely to reveal but to define rationality. Bruce Ackerman's *Social Justice and the Liberal State* is only the most explicit of the recent attempts to impose on language a set of "neutral constraints" that make speech the parent of justice. This verbal eugenics, in which justice is produced by the controlled breeding of words, threatens to displace entirely the idea of justice as the product of political judgment.

The philosophers are not really the primary culprits, however. They follow even as they lead, and if they have not always recognized, in Kolakowski's words, that "man as a cognitive being is only part of man as a whole,"[1] it is in part because the political realists have persuaded them that man as a creature of interest is the whole man and that the rationalization of interest is the philosophical task that needs doing. The philosophers can hardly be blamed then for developing notions of rationality rooted in instrumental prudence and notions of justice legitimized by enlightened self-interest. How can speech be anything but cognitive under these circumstances?

Stripped of such artificial disciplines, however, talk appears as a mediator of affection and affiliation as well as of interest and identity, of patriotism as well as of individuality. It can build community as well as maintain rights and seek consensus as well as resolve conflict. It offers, along with meanings and significations, silences, rituals, symbols, myths, expressions and solicitations, and a hundred other quiet and noisy manifestations of our common humanity. Strong democracy seeks institutions that can give these things a voice—and an ear.

THE THIRD ISSUE that liberal theorists have underappreciated is the complicity of talk in action. With talk we can invent alternative futures, create mutual purposes, and construct competing visions of community. Its potentialities thrust talk into the realm of intentions and consequences and render it simultaneously more provisional and more concrete than phi-

[1] Leszek Kolakowski, cited by Richard Bernstein. *Praxis and Action* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), p. 74, note.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

losophers are wont to recognize. Their failure of imagination stems in part from the passivity of representative democratic politics and in part from the impatience of speculative philosophy with contingency, which entails possibility as well as indeterminateness. But significant political effects and actions are possible only to the extent that politics is embedded in a world of fortune, uncertainty, and contingency.

Political talk is not talk *about* the world; it is talk that makes and remakes the world. The posture of the strong democrat is thus "pragmatic" in the sense of William James's definition of pragmatism as "the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking toward last things, fruits, consequences, facts."[2] James's pragmatist "turns toward concreteness and adequacy, toward facts, toward action, and toward power . . . it means the open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality, and the pretense of finality in truth." Strong democracy is pragmatism translated into politics in the participatory mode. Although James did not pursue the powerful political implications of his position, he was moved to write: "See already how democratic [pragmatism] is. Her manners are as various and flexible, her resources as rich and endless, and her conclusions as friendly as those of mother nature."[3] The active, future-oriented disposition of strong democratic talk embodies James's instinctive sense of pragmatism's political implications.

Strong democratic talk, then, always involves listening as well as speaking, feeling as well as thinking, and acting as well as reflecting. These characteristics are evident in and help to explain the many political functions of talk in a strong democratic system. It is well known to democrats and liberals alike that talk serves to articulate interests and facilitate bargaining on fixed interests. Persuasion is also a widely acknowledged aim of talk. But there are a number of less familiar aspects of talk that "strong democracy" brings to the fore. Agenda-setting is a good example.

In liberal democracies, agendas are usually regarded as the province of elites—of committees, or executive officials, or even pollsters. Yet a people that does not set its own agenda, by means of talk and direct political exchange, not only relinquishes a vital power of government but also exposes its remaining powers of decision to ongoing subversion. What counts as an "issue," and how such issues are formulated, may to a large extent predetermine what decisions are reached. For example, the choice between building a small freeway and a 12-lane interstate highway in lower Manhattan may seem of little moment to those who prefer to solve the problems of urban transportation with mass rail transit. Or the right to choose between six mildly right-of-center candidates may fail to exercise the civic imagination of socialists. Nor is it sufficient to offer a wide variety of options, for what constitutes an option—how a question is formulated—is as controversial as the range of choices offered. Abortion is clearly an issue that arouses intense public concern at present, but to say that it belongs on the public agenda says too little.

The vital question remains, How is the issue presented? In this form: "Do you believe there should be an amendment to the Constitution protecting the life of the unborn child?" Or in this form: "Do you believe there should be an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting abortions?" When asked the first question by a *New York Times*–CBS poll in 1980, over one-half responded "yes," whereas when asked the second question only 29 percent said "yes." He who controls the agenda—if only its wording—controls the outcome.

A strong democracy ought to place its agenda at the center rather than at the beginning of its politics. It subjects every pressing issue to continuous examination and possible reformulation. Its agenda *is*, before anything else, its agenda. It thus scrutinizes what remains unspoken, looking into the crevices of silence for signs of an unarticulated problem, a speechless victim, or a mute protester. The agenda of a community tells a community

[2] William James, *Pragmatism and the Meaning of Truth*, ed. A. J. Ayer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 32.

[3] Ibid., p. 44.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where and what it is. It defines that community's mutualism and the limits of mutualism, and draws up plans for pasts to be institutionalized or overcome and for futures to be avoided or achieved. Far from being a mere preliminary of democracy, agenda-setting becomes one of its pervasive, defining functions.

Strong democratic talk also permits us to explore our mutuality. When talk is reduced to mere signing in a bargaining process, it can permit us at best only to explore our differences in the search for mutually beneficial exchanges. Rational-choice models such as the "prisoner's dilemma" translate even altruism into the language of interest. But because it permits us to treat our interlocutors as kin by virtue of our common language, rather than as adversaries by virtue of our divergent interests, strong democratic talk becomes a medium of mutual exploration. The functions of talk in deliberation (airing choices), bargaining (exchanging benefits), and decision-making (choosing goals) are complemented by the more open-ended art of conversation.

Fixing its own rules as it conducts itself, a conversation follows an informal dialectic in which talk is used not to chart distinctions in the typical analytic fashion but to explore and create commonalities. Analytic reason yields contradictions: individual versus society or freedom versus authority. Conversation gives life to a notion of "citizen" in which such antinomies are superseded. *Right* and *wrong* cease to be viable terms of judgment in an interchange that makes no claim to certainty or truth. Think of two neighbors talking for the first time over a fence, or two college freshmen talking over a first cup of coffee: there is no debate or argument or staking out of positions only a "getting to know you" and thus "getting to know *us*."

When exploration is the aim, precise language may even be an obstacle. In juries and multimember courts, in committees, and in diplomacy, ambiguity and novel formulations often produce agreements that legalistic speech or economic bargaining could not hope to yield. A vague but encompassing phrase that is susceptible to several interpretations may serve mutuality far better than an exact phrase weighted down with all the baggage of historical stipulation and fixed usage. Yet where diplomats, politicians, and judges are encouraged to fudge in search of agreement, constituents, voters, and citizens are urged to follow the polarizing example of rational choice models. Harold Nicholson thus chides democrats in his classic study *Diplomacy* by assailing "the vagueness and fluidity of democratic policy" as one of "its salient vices. . . . There is a tendency of all democracies to prefer a vague and comforting formula to a precise and binding definition."[4]

But "precise and binding" language implies clear winners and losers and sets a schedule of gains and losses that must be publicly acknowledged by all parties. The clarity of the Versailles Treaty that ended World War I was surpassed only by its potential for disaster. In keeping with the Wilsonian model of unambiguous diplomacy, it assigned the roles of winner and loser with perfect precision and thereby helped create not a world safe for democracy but a world doomed to enmity and to the eventual resumption of armed conflict. The Middle East accord worked out by Carter, Begin, and Sadat, in contrast, developed language that each of the parties could interpret in its own way, so that each could view the agreement as a victory for its side.

The art of conversation is the art of finding language that is broad and novel enough to bridge conflicting perceptions of the world yet sufficiently genuine to withstand the later pounding of the subscribing parties. Although language alone can hardly hold the dike against a tide of adversary interests, it can often transform interests over time. Words have a limited but potent magic, either to divide or to unite; and silence too has a magic, if only to soothe too-often iterated passions. Diplomats and labor negotiators use both talk and silence with a studious regard for ambiguity; conference committees and the professional legislators who people them can move party ideologues to consensus by moving commas in a legislative preamble. These are the conversational skills needed by citizens who

[4] Harold Nicholson, *Diplomacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 96.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wish to be self-governing, if they are to achieve mutuality without surrendering autonomy.

Strong democratic talk can also promote powerful forms of affiliation and affection. Conversation enables us to know and even to understand one another, but we do not necessarily like what we know and understand. Thus it is useful to separate the exploratory from the affective uses of talk in democracy, even though these obviously overlap a good deal. For whereas in exploring mutuality, talk retains its cognitive structure (though it may stretch it for the sake of ambiguity), in serving affection and affiliation talk takes advantage of its potential for emotive expression, musical utterance, inflection, feeling, ritual, and symbolism (or myth). We talk to infants, to animals, to lovers, to ourselves, and to God in sounds for which neither economists nor analytic philosophers would find much use.

Yet the sound of music and the sound of poetry move and bind with a power that belongs to talk. Through words we convey information, articulate interests, and pursue arguments, but it is through tone, color, volume, and inflection that we feel, affect, and touch each other. We reassure, we frighten, we unsettle, we comfort, we intimidate, we soothe, we hate, and we love by manipulating the medium rather than the content of speech. Indeed, we can use the medium to contradict its message—as in Ring Lardner's whimsical line, "'Shut up!' he explained"—or to create irony, that irksome tribute to the deeply layered texture of all speech. And our talk is peppered with ritual speech: greetings and goodbyes, prayers and incantations, exclamations and expletives, all of which in their banality and conventionality express and reinforce the daily structures of common life.

The United States Senate is full of invaluable sound and fury signifying nothing. Meaningless hortatory phrases insinuate themselves into the debate and bring with them a civility that helps to attenuate the force of divisive passions. The senator from New York who yields "to the honorable and loquacious gentleman from the great farm state of Iowa," so that the gentleman can launch into a diatribe against New York's financial mismanagement, is testifying to his respect for regionalism, his belief in federalism and variety, and his willingness to listen to and work with adversaries in a common body that is responsible for the nation's welfare—all this with a phrase or two of parliamentary grandiloquence.

• *Grass-roots politics* and participatory democracy need this quaint language of affiliation and affection no less than do the great legislative houses and courts of the world. Voting—which is already the least significant act of citizenship in a democracy—has been stripped in America of almost all pomp and ritual, largely in the name of the kind of efficiency symbolized by voting machines and the kind of privatism represented by the secret ballot. Voting should be an occasion for celebration as well as for choice, just as the exercise of freedom should be a rite as well as a right.

But today voting in the United States is rather like using a public toilet: we wait in line with a crowd in order to close ourselves up in a small compartment where we can relieve ourselves in solitude and privacy of our burden, pull a lever, and then, yielding to the next in line, go silently home. Because our vote is secret—"private"—we do not need to explain or justify it to others (or, indeed, to ourselves) in a fashion that would require us to think publicly or politically. The public rites of voting can have an affiliating effect that is as valuable to democracy as the decision itself. In a strong democracy, affect and effect are Siamese twins; neither can thrive without the other.

• *The affective functions of talk* are not limited to ceremonial community-building or to entirely noncognitive aspects of emotive speech. Talk of every kind—cognitive, prudential, exploratory, conversational, and affective—can enhance empathy, and there is perhaps no stronger social bond and no more significant ally of public thinking than the one fashioned by empathy. Disinterestedness and prudential justice pursue consensus through negation and by denying the possibility of a completely private hedonism ("I am appar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ently not the only one with needs," or "Unless I recognize the rights of others, they will not recognize my rights"). Empathy reaches consensus by affirming commonality and affection ("I am like others" and "I like others"). The difference in the kinds of attachment that grow out of prudence and out of empathy is the difference between a contract and a friendship or between an incorporated (limited-liability) economic association and a civil community.

Empathy has a politically miraculous power to enlarge perspectives and expand consciousness in a fashion that not so much accommodates as transcends private interests and the antagonisms they breed. A neighbor is a stranger transformed by empathy and shared interests into a friend—an *artificial* friend, however, whose kinship is a contrivance of politics rather than natural or personal and private. This distinction is crucial in the civic process, for the attachments we feel toward natural kith and kin can be constricting and parochializing; they can exclude and subvert rather than nourish citizenship. Empathy, however, as an artificial product of political talk, arouses feelings that attach precisely to "strangers," to those who do not belong to our private families or clubs or churches.

Talk thus breaks through the walls of the private world of family, friends, and neighbors and ordains concourse with strangers in a larger artificial world of political citizenship. Politics is the art of engaging strangers in talk and of stimulating in them an artificial kinship made in equal parts of empathy, common cause, and enlightened self-interest. The affective power of talk is, then, the power to stretch the human imagination so that the *I* of private self-interest can be reconceptualized and reconstituted as a *we* that makes possible civility and common political action.

Talk helps us overcome narrow self-interest, but it plays an equally significant role in buttressing the autonomy of individual wills that is essential to democracy. It is through talk that we constantly reencounter and repossess the beliefs on the basis of which we exert our will in the political realm. To be free, it is not enough for us simply to will what we choose to will. We must will what we possess—what truly belongs to us. John Stuart Mill commented on the "fatal tendency of mankind to leave all thinking about a thing when it is no longer doubtful." He ascribed to this tendency "the cause of about half [of humanity's] errors." Mindless convictions not only spawn errors, they turn those who hold them into charlatans of liberty. Today's autonomously held belief is tomorrow's heteronomous orthodoxy unless, tomorrow, it is reexamined and repossessed.

Talk is the principal mechanism by which we retest and thus repossess our convictions, which means that a democracy that does not institutionalize talk will soon be without autonomous citizens, though men and women who call themselves citizens may from time to time deliberate, choose, and vote.

This, among all the functions of talk, is the least liable to representation, since only the presence of our own wills working on a value can endow that value with legitimacy and us with our autonomy. Subjecting a value to the test of repossession is a measure of legitimacy as well as of autonomy: forced knowingly to embrace their prejudices, many will falter. Prejudice is best practiced in the dark by dint of habit or passion. Mobs are expert executors of bigotry because they assimilate individual wills into a group will and relieve individuals of any responsibility for their actions. It is above all the imagination that dies when will is subordinated to instinct.

"My language is the sum total of myself," writes Peirce, "for the man is the thought."[5] But language is communal and its evolution determines the evolution of self and other, of the communal we. Those who control language, who control the reformulation and reconceptualization that language constantly undergoes, thus control the communal we. If the definition of democracy as popular sovereignty has any meaning, then it is sovereignty over language—over talk fashioned by and for the talkers themselves. Democratize language, give each citizen some control over what the community will mean by the crucial terms it uses to define all the citizens' selves and lives in

[5] Charles Peirce, *Philosophical Writings*, J. Buchler, ed. (New York: Dover, 1955), p. 249.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

public and private, and other forms of equality will follow. We may redistribute goods and make power accountable, but if we reserve talk and its evolution to specialists—to journalists or managers or clerics or packagers or bureaucrats or statesmen or advertisers or philosophers or social scientists—then no amount of equality will yield democracy.

The evolution of language takes several forms that are pertinent to democratic politics and that involve reformulation and reconceptualization. We can summarize these forms handily under three headings: clarifying the unspoken past; challenging the paradigmatic present; and envisioning the uncreated future.

Democrats have trouble with the past: government is for the living, they cry, echoing Thomas Paine. Yet if they are honest they must admit with Burke that the true majority in every community lies dead in the grave. The dead are heard through custom and tradition, but they can speak live only with the aid of the living, who have an obligation to find appropriate formulations to encapsulate the beliefs and experiences of their forebears.

Michael Oakeshott appears to have something like this point in mind when he describes maxims of public conduct as "abridgements of tradition," which capture the practices of the past in symbols that give them enduring influence in the present. Words serve here as ritual evocations of past events that embody the will of our ancestors. Like flags, they symbolize shared accomplishments and the singularity of a common heritage; like monuments, they memorialize heroes and founders; like constitutions and treaties, they represent the victory of unity over conflict.

• *The past* does not speak only to conservatives. America offers its children both Paine and Hamilton, both Jefferson and Madison. And Burke himself proved that honoring the integrity of indigenous traditions can have radical consequences (as his defense of American independence and East Indian autonomy) no less than conservative ones (as his better-known defense of the French monarchy against the Revolution). A democratic community is inevitably obliged to create its past no less than its future.

If talk can give the dead back their voices, it can also challenge the paradigms of the living and bring fundamental changes in the meaning or valuation of words. Major shifts in ideology and political power are always accompanied by such paradigmatic shifts in language. The largely pejorative meaning that the classical and early Christian periods gave to such concepts as *individual* and *privacy* was transformed during the Renaissance in a fashion that eventually produced the Protestant Reformation and the ethics of commercial society. Then 18th-century capitalism effected a transvaluation of the traditional vocabulary of virtue in a manner that put selfishness and avarice to work in the name of public goods.

• *Poverty* was once a sign of moral weakness; now it is a badge of environmental victimization. *Crime* once proceeded from original sin; now it is an escape from poverty. *States' rights* once bore the stigma of dishonor, later signified vigorous sectionalism, then was a code word for racism, and now has become a byword for the new decentralized federalism. *Busing* was once an instrument of equal educational opportunity; now it is a means of destroying communities. The shifts in the meanings of these and other key words mirror fundamental national shifts in power and ideology. The clash of competing visions—of social Darwinism versus collective responsibility and political mutualism, of original sin and innate ideas versus environmentalism, of anarchism versus collectivism—ultimately plays itself out on the field of everyday language, and the winner in the struggle for meaning may emerge as the winner in the clash of visions, with the future itself as the spoils of victory.

An ostensibly free citizenry that leaves this battle to elites, thinking that it makes a sufficient display of its freedom by voting on issues already formulated in concepts and terms over which it has exercised no control, is in fact giving away the greater part of its sovereignty. How can such a citizenry help but oppose busing if busing means nothing more than the wrecking of communities? How can it support the right to abortion if abortion means murder, period? To participate in a meaningful process of decision on these questions, self-governing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

citizens must participate in the talk through which the questions are formulated and given a decisive political conception. The anti-Vietnam War movement of the 1960s did just this, of course; it won no elections, it participated in no votes, it contributed to no legislative debates. But it radically altered how most Americans saw the war and so helped bring it to an end.

All of these functions of talk converge toward a single, crucial end—the development of a citizenry capable of genuine public thinking and political judgment and thus able to envision a common future in terms of genuinely common goods. To make this end realizable requires that our present structure of representative institutions be supplemented by a layer of participatory institutions in which talk can play a major role. Most critical would be a national system of neighborhood assemblies (resembling Jefferson's "ward government" idea), through which every citizen would have an opportunity to meet regularly to deliberate issues of local and national significance. Such a system might be tied into regional or national electronic town meetings, which would utilize the new telecommunications technology and permit discussions across wide areas.

To give deliberation a significance, it might also be desirable to support a limited national initiative and referendum process. Talk without power is ultimately only a game, and citizenship without responsibility may be even more alienating than passivity. Other participatory institutions—including national citizen service, a democratized workplace, office-holding by lot, and even a limited voucher experiment—would offer hospitality to talk. It surely is one of the most telling charges against our current democratic practice that there is so little room for civic talk. More talk means more participation, and more participation means more talk.

If democracy is to survive, it requires not merely that we choose those who govern or vote in episodic elections; it requires that we engage regularly and permanently in political discourse. Speechlessness may be the most debilitating form of powerlessness. And the one thing we can be sure of is that democracy cannot be talked to death. □

dissent **Major Sales Outlets for Our Magazine in New York City:**

BARNES & NOBLE, ANNEX
126 5th Ave. (18th St.)

BARNES & NOBLE
56 W. 9th St.

BRENTANO'S
20 University Place (9th St.)

BRENTANO'S
11 West 47th St.

COLISEUM BOOKS
1771 Broadway (57th St.)

B. DALTON
109 East 42nd St.

EASTERN NEWSSTANDS:
30 Rockefeller Plaza
350 5th Ave.
540 Madison Ave.
200 Park Ave.

EASTSIDE BOOKSTORE
34 St. Mark's Place

ENDICOTT BOOKS
450 Columbus Ave.

HUDSON EMPORIUM
428 Hudson St.

HUDSON STREET PAPERS
581 Hudson St.

HYDE PARK STATIONERS
992 Madison Ave.

IDLE HOURS
59 Greenwich Ave.

THE MAGAZINE STORE
Broadway bet. 62nd & 63rd St.

PAPYRUS BOOKSTORE
2915 Broadway (114th St.)

PARSLEY SAGE, INC.
73 7th Ave. (Barrow)

PERIODIC NEWSSTAND
405 6th Ave.

RADICONE BROS. NEWSSTAND
1 East 42nd St. (5th Ave.)

RUTKIN NEWSSTAND
42nd St. (5th-6th Ave.)

SHAH STATIONERY
2795 Broadway (107th-108th)

ST. MARK'S BOOKSHOP
13 St. Mark's Place

STATE NEWS STORE
1243 3rd Ave.

TRIPLET STATIONERY
401 E. 57th St. (1st Ave.)

WEST FOURTH STREET BOOK STORE 148 West 4th St.

Y.M.C.
7 E. 8th St.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Debate on Education

Diane Ravitch Comments, Deborah Meier Replies

1. Diane Ravitch

I am grateful to the editors of *Dissent* for the opportunity to reply to Deborah Meier's article, "'Getting Tough' in the Schools: A Conservative Prescription," reviewing my book, *The Troubled Crusade*, in the Winter 1984 *Dissent*.

I hesitate to call Deborah Meier's article a book review, because it has so little to do with the book I wrote. She uses the review as an opportunity to express her opposition to current efforts to reform education, and she would have been on firmer ground had she directly reviewed the reports of the National Commission on Excellence, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and others (all of which appeared after my book was in press or published). Contrary to her assertions, *The Troubled Crusade* contains no policy recommendations, no visions of the future (corporate or otherwise), no pedagogical prescriptions: It is a history. Her references to the book are without exception either misstatements of fact, misinterpretations, misquotations, unfounded allegations, misattributions of my views, or misuses of context. Because the article is so riddled with error, it is impossible for me to respond to all of them without writing a piece longer than hers. Thus the reader should not assume that I accept as correct whatever I do not question.

Let me make clear that I reject the designation "neoconservative historian." That makes about as much sense as a "Democratic historian" or a "Republican historian." One's first obligation as a historian is to represent the past accurately, not to present a party line. Unfortunately, Meier is unable to distinguish between polemic and history and thus projects her own strong ideological bias on whatever she reads.

THIS PROJECTION OF HER BIAS leads her to impute views to me that are not present in the book. When I record a debate that occurred 30 years ago between progressives and critics like Arthur Bestor and Robert Hutchins, I set forward as honestly as I know how what the views of the antagonists were. They are not my views; they are the statements of influential spokesmen. She has no license whatever to take the words of one or another debater of another era and say that they are mine, simply because they are quoted in my book. They are not.

She has a distressing habit of putting phrases in quotes in order to create the impression that she is quoting from the book. The reader should not assume that a word or a phrase surrounded by quotation marks is drawn from the book. For example, she does this in several instances with the phrase "tough, verbal, and required," which also appears as "verbal, tough, and required" (pp. 67, 69). I don't know why the phrases are in quotes, because they do not appear in the book. In the same way, her quoted references to "toughness" and "rigor" are her inventions, and she has no source in the book for her claim that I advocate "more homework, tougher grading, fewer electives, and more tests." On page 61, she claims that I use the label "permissive progressivism," but I can't find that phrase anywhere in the book. On the same page, she refers to "what Ravitch enthusiastically calls 'a pedagogical revolution.'" The narrative factually describes the flurry of curricular reform in the early 1960s and the interest in new technology, but concludes: "The expected pedagogical revolution in the schools was not to be, however." Is this what she calls "enthusiastic"?

She chides me for believing that "democracy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rests upon formal education, that ignorance breeds tyranny, and that without literacy representative government will falter." I never claim that formal education is the basis of democracy; I believe that the press, the mass media, religious institutions, and labor unions are also potent instruments of education, and that their freedom to flourish is necessary in a democracy. And, yes, I do believe that literacy and free political institutions of this kind are the foundations of democracy.

She insists on putting words in my mouth, or in my book, which fit her argument. For example, she says I quoted President Johnson "approvingly," but the text itself (p. 161) merely quotes him, neither approvingly nor disapprovingly. She can't seem to understand that a history such as this reproduces contemporary arguments, debates, and pronouncements as they were expressed, and that they are not put there by the author for ideological reasons. She refuses to believe that a narrative account of events and issues is acceptable unless one places a sociological or economic interpretation on it. She is free to do so, but I did not.

She misquotes my straightforward description of several books in order to make me fit the narrow-minded characterization she has invented. Compare her reference to the Herbert Kohl book on page 65, which makes me sound snide and disapproving, to the actual sentence in my book on page 236: "Kohl described a year of teaching in which he set aside the sterile prescribed curriculum and encouraged the children to express themselves through creative writing." There is nothing in the tone of the sentence or the paragraph that implies disapproval, unlike her caricature of it. Similarly, compare her reference to the books by James Herndon to my description of them as "the memoirs of the articulate young teacher who triumphs over his principal, the other teachers, and the system by treating his pupils as human beings." If I distorted Herndon, as Meier claims, he failed to notice it in his positive review of the book in the *San Francisco Chronicle* last fall.

Her comments on the book's depiction of Head Start are malicious and dishonest. She would have the reader believe that I am opposed to health, nutrition, and improved family life for poor children. In reality, the book contrasts the subsequent development of Head Start with the ideal set forward in 1964 by Benjamin Bloom, Allison Davis, and Robert Hess, who said that the school and the community should provide each child with breakfast, lunch, appropriate clothing, and medical care, if his parents were not able to; that nursery schools and kindergartens should provide poor children with "the conditions for their intellectual development and the learning-to-learn stimulation which is found in the most favorable home environment"; and that the object is "to start with the child where he is and to proceed by a carefully developed and sequential program to bring him up to a level where he can learn as well as other children and eventually under the same conditions as other children." These are still admirable goals for Head Start.

In her footnote 12, she suggests that I am anti-union, because I was a member of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Federal Role in Education, whose report included some phrases critical of unions, and that I am soft on tuition tax credits because they are "a curious omission" in my history. First, the treatment of the growth of unions in the book (pp. 313–15) concludes on a positive note; second, the book has been favorably received by reviewers in publications of the American Federation of Teachers; third, tuition tax credits were not an important issue during the period covered by my book, from 1945 to 1980. Last, as long as she was reading the Twentieth Century Fund report and associating me with its recommendations, why didn't she mention that the report specifically rejects tuition tax credits and vouchers and calls for a substantial increase in federal spending for education? To do so would have made hash of her ideological attack, but it would at least have been truthful.

SIMILAR ERRORS and purposeful misreadings can be found in nearly every paragraph in the article. She had something that she wanted to say, and my book offered her a convenient vehicle for her polemic. I hope that readers will make their own judgments by reading the book. □

dissent

ARE YOU MOVING?

•

Second-class publications are *not* forwarded by your Post Office, but returned (at senders' expense) to be repackaged and reshipped: . . . *Three postage payments, for us, plus weeks of delay.* . . .

To avoid this, and help DISSENT, *please notify us one month in advance of your change of address.* Send both old and new address to:

•

DISSENT, 521 Fifth Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10017

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2. Deborah Meier Replies

Diane Ravitch disclaims the designation of "neoconservative historian" and presents the job description "historian" uncontaminated by a point of view. Thus *The Troubled Crusade* contains no partisan view of the world; no particular "sociological or economic interpretation," "no vision of the future," "no pedagogical prescription," and "no policy recommendations."

Nonsense. Historians' fingerprints are all over the histories they write. The events of the Hundred Years War are filtered differently by Froissart and by Barbara Tuchman. Surely, Ravitch would agree that reconstructing the past is an immensely complex task, requiring human judgment, selection, omission, and presentation. It is my view that Ravitch's way of shaping the past 30 years is based upon a set of historical assumptions and conventional wisdoms that coincide with the major educational reports and lead to similar "inevitabilities."

It is true that her book has an appearance of Olympian disinterestedness. Yet one can hardly find a page without examples of a strong viewpoint: approval/disapproval, agreement/disagreement. She quotes some people, not others. Some authors get the last word, others do not. Some people are paraphrased, not always too kindly, and others speak eloquently for themselves. Some events are included, others omitted.

Examples:

Page 49. "Probably the most egregious misuses of inconsistent experimental data was the misrepresentation of the mental discipline issue," which led the progressives to eliminate Latin and advanced mathematics as obligatory courses in secondary schools. It's fair to question the "supposedly 'scientific' findings" as well as the experimental methods of the progressives, and to regret the dropping of Latin. But this is Ravitch speaking, not history. "Probably the most egregious" is a judgment, not fact.

During the same period IQ and achievement tests were institutionalized, despite the questionable "scientific" foundations upon which they rested. Mass testing has played at least as large a role in changing the shape of education as the demise of Latin. Just one small example, acknowledged by Ravitch in her *only* sentence on testing (p. 326), is the possibility that such testing played a major role in the decline in writing ability. Which was the more "egregious"? The current state of research on most educational issues precludes proof, but Ravitch, like most of us, tends to cite those research claims that suit her biases.

Page 157. Critics of "middle-class values" had a "crude analysis" and used "confused categories," Ravitch says. "It was *certainly* [italics added] true that the poor needed the verbal skills and work habits that the productive sector of the economy required." By the "most unfortunate irony," she continues, "scholarly and popular criticism of verbal skills and middle-class work habits occurred at the very time that large numbers of poor children . . . most needed to learn" these skills and values. If her implied assumptions are correct, there *are* real villains in this narrative, however well-intentioned.

Necessary to Ravitch's "unfortunate irony" scenario is acceptance of her interpretation of the causes of unemployment and job discrimination, her unexamined notions about the nature of the verbal skills and middle-class values these children lacked, and her limited understanding of what the more sophisticated critics meant by the damaging "culture" of schools. Diane Ravitch's "certainly" is built upon what I believe is a gross oversimplification and misinterpretation of the issues. There is another way of telling that same story, another view of what were the primary roadblocks facing the poor, both in our schools and in the labor market.

Page 300. "Assertions to the contrary," says Ravitch, "it was impossible to demonstrate that girls were, in fact, 'damaged' by textbooks that quoted men more often than women or by readers that showed mothers as housewives." Doesn't this ironic paraphrasing of the feminist critique of textbooks reveal the author's attitude? In explaining why more men than women finished college and received advanced degrees, Ravitch says that, "*Clearly* [italics added], the intervening variables were demographic factors like women's age at marriage and the fertility rate, not the language of readers." Clearly, my eye! The cause of early marriage and large families is surely more complex than sexist readers. Feminists would surely agree to that. And "demographic factors" are not causes but symptoms. Early marriage and large families, and women's sole responsibility for their care, were not phenomena existing in a vacuum.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Page 326. Our alternatives, says Ravitch, were "whether a democratic education system best served its students by letting them choose what they wanted to study, if they wanted to study, or whether it served them best by seeing that each and every one of them received a liberal education —including literature and language, science and mathematics, history and the arts."

Do you hear a deck being stacked? Any teacher can tell you, and studies amply confirm, that the standard curriculum of most schools for at least the past 30 years has consisted of pretty much the same watered-down, largely required list of courses that meet neither this liberal ideal nor exaggerated permissiveness.

We don't, for one thing, yet know *how* to deliver Ravitch's version of the liberal arts "to each and every one" so that it will be "received." Not even Summerhill practiced letting kids do whatever they wanted whenever they wanted. Is Ravitch providing a dispassionate historical summary of the available alternatives, or do I detect an ideologue twisting and turning views she doesn't like?

Pages 328–30. The hero in her concluding true-life story is Rowan Torrey, a lay citizen in the deep South, "college educated and toughened in the Marines." In a manner Ravitch does not explain, this determined black man took up the cudgels of school reform and hired a "strict disciplinarian" who soon "eliminated options." Is it solely the claim of historic truth that leads Ravitch to end her book with this particular vignette or is it her admiration for Torrey's approach to solving our educational ills?

NOW TO SOME of the specific charges of misquotation, malice, and so on. (Like Ravitch, if I don't reply to each one, it's not because I think she's right.)

(1) To describe Ravitch as a "neoconservative" is not to charge her with a crime. My socialist views are not unrelated to my educational views, although they do not predetermine them. "Neoconservative" seems to fit not only this book but most of Ravitch's published work on education during the past decade. Would Ravitch feel better if she were called a historian of neoconservative outlook?

(2) Ravitch misses my point re her handling of the books by Kohl, Herndon, and Holt. The pervasive quality of Ravitch's book, like so much of the literature on schooling, is an absence of *understanding* of real classroom life and the compromises and dilemmas that cause our best-laid plans to founder. The three authors I cited are superb describers of such classrooms, and Ravitch's brief summary of each book was, as I said, either distorted or inaccurate, even if flattering.

(3) The major substantive attack Ravitch makes is that I am both "malicious and dishonest" in presenting her view of Head Start and its goals. Well, let's see.

On page 158, Ravitch claims that Head Start's "original plan was intellectually oriented and aimed specifically to develop 'the attitudes and aptitudes' associated with 'middle-class culture.'" The reference to "the ideal set forward in 1964" by Bloom, Davis, and Gess comes six pages earlier in a discussion of the theory of cultural deprivation, *not* of Head Start. (The text itself, incidentally, "merely quotes" Bloom *et al.* The word "admirable" is not in her original.)

In the next paragraph on Head Start (p. 159), she continues with this critical point: "the expectation that Head Start would stress intellectual growth and transition to 'middle-class' values was not realized." She points to several explanations for the failure to realize the "original plan" cited above —from "explosive growth" to "the experts in early childhood education." The experts were "more attuned to a multifaceted, child-development approach than to the single-minded goal of intellectual growth; consequently the typical Head Start project was 'child-centered' and focused on 'the development of the whole child' with emphasis on social and emotional growth."

The "traditional" curriculum, Ravitch continues, "emphasized free play and permissive adult-child relations rather than structured learning. In typical Head Start centers, cognitive goals were no more important, and often less important, than social, medical, and psychological services, nutrition, adult career development, and parent involvement." As a result, the "typical Head Start center put little emphasis on cognitive growth." If the views of Bloom *et al.* are, as Ravitch now claims, "admirable," why implicitly denigrate them here? Does she really not recognize that in typical neoconservative fashion she has posed "cognitive" and "intellectual" in counterposition to free play, psychological services, nutrition, and so on? The proponents of the "tradition" believed that these were fundamentally connected to intellectual growth. I still do.

Still, if a diffusion of goals led, as Ravitch claims, to Head Start's failure to close the achievement gap, am I correct in thinking she was unhappy with that diffusion? Is this not precisely an example of the kind of failure to limit goals that she

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

writes about in her introduction (p. xii)? Is it then malicious to point this out?

In reality, ravitch's notion of "cognitive growth" was the prevalent one from the start, and it has remained the guiding principle of most Head Start classrooms. Ravitch has her history wrong. Despite the child-centered experts, most real-life Head Start *classrooms* focused narrowly on 3–R skills. Even way back in the '60s when I taught Head Start, it was the "structured" workbooks, not "play," that were being promoted. Learning the ABCs, not blocks and sand, were "in." It could well be that the greatest cognitive achievements of Head Start were brought about by what happened *outside* the classrooms: those school lunches, medical services and, above all, the parental involvement and support that most Head Start centers thrived on.

This same debate over early childhood goals and methods is relevant again as public schools vie for preschool and kindergarten funds. But today on-site medical teams are an idle dream and parental involvement is passé. These are casualties of an ideological assault by powerful groups who also demand that schools stick to "limited goals." As one top New York City educational leader told her kindergarten supervisors recently, "The time of milk and cookies is over. We want results."

We are witnessing an even earlier introduction of formal paper-and-pencil instruction and formal testing in the name of "focusing on cognition." As they enter the system, three- and four-year-olds are tested and then sorted into *gifted* and *handicapped* slots. Yes, Diane Ravitch, it's this real stuff that happens to us in our schools that makes me sensitive to the way you tell our history. When our traditional early-childhood values are under assault, your ever-so-careful explanation that you didn't actually say you opposed them is welcome. But it needs saying a great deal more clearly if you're not to be adopted by politicians eager to sell the public a phony success story with improved paper-and-pencil test scores minus the cost of supplying those unnecessary social services.

(4) The progressives and their critics had a debate, and Ravitch insists she was just putting forth their views as "honestly as I know how." Does she really believe that this is what she's doing when (on p. 78) she describes the progressives as "a cult whose principles were taught as dogma and whose critics were treated as dangerous heretics"? Is this an objective historian speaking, or a neoconservative ideologue?

Diane Ravitch has hold of some valuable material here, but not the whole story. Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Barbara Biber, and Milly Almy, all self-proclaimed progressives, are not once mentioned although this was the period they did some of their most important work. Piaget is mentioned, once (p. 245), to make a point entirely unrelated to his work. How can Ravitch write of American schools in the postwar period without a serious recognition of Piaget's enormous importance? Precisely by omitting these major thinkers, Ravitch makes simple a complex debate.

(5) Yes, "tough, verbal, and required" are not Ravitch's exact words. I'm sorry I didn't make that clear. But try page 326 and you get a phrase that *is* hers—"easy or nonverbal electives." And what's the source for thinking she's opposed to them, and that she advocates more homework and tougher grading? On page 326 she describes the central symptoms of our "declining standards" as "curtailed homework, grade inflation, and large numbers of easy or nonverbal electives." This led me to think Ravitch would favor more homework, a tougher grading system, and more required and verbal courses.

The New York Regents are currently voting on a plan that would eliminate all electives, including most art and vocational courses, from high schools that give a Regents diploma. Some states have gone further. This is a live issue. Considerable data suggest that course options are vital to many of our children, and it seems inequitable that private-school parents will still be able, by paying huge sums, to make sure their kids get them. In the absence of alternative responses to "declining standards," Ravitch's paragraph does read as support for these prescriptive solutions.

(6) As to unionism and tuition tax credits—I wasn't *claiming* that Ravitch was antiunion, maybe just not very courageous. The comments in the 20th Century Fund report are not merely "critical," they're antiunion. Coming at a time when unions are under severe assault, Ravitch could have dissociated herself from them, something members of commission reports do on occasion. The tuition-tax credit issue has been in the spotlight long before Ravitch sent her book to the publisher. Ask Pat Moynihan.

In an article by Eleanor Duckworth in the Winter 1984 *Harvard Education Review* (which I commend to *Dissent* readers), Massachusetts' educator John Lawton is quoted as remarking that "if a kid can't clear four feet, it doesn't do much good to raise the bar to four feet, six inches." The one thing raising the bar will do is eliminate more kids

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from the competition. Ravitch's book is not written in a vacuum. A lot of action is going on out there in the real world. The bar *is* being raised in our schools, while provisions for the needs of individual learners are being systematically restricted. Increasingly legislators and school boards, not teachers, select curricula, determine our daily schedules, the amount of homework assigned, promotional rules, and grading policies. At a time of public stinginess, "adopt-a-school" is the newest corporate charity, a bizarre notion at best.

IT'S NOT a comfortable situation for those trying to meet our children's needs. Not even the most brilliantly conceived and executed curriculum is the answer to decent jobs for most of my East Harlem students, though anything to improve their odds is worth it. But it is tragic to see their interests, passions, and curiosity about the world squeezed out of the classrooms and replaced by more and more mandated programs tied into testing and accountability schemes. We're again seeing overaged and oversized boys stuck in lower grades until they're finally old enough to be truant. And 5 percent of our children are annually declared "handicapped" and sent off to underfunded special education schools while "standards" go up, early pressures to perform increase, and objective "norms" disregard individual variations and different cultures.

Limited funds may go to improving salaries but not to giving teachers more decision-making power. They may go toward longer hours but not to decreasing class sizes. The people who brought us the idea that deregulation was the answer to the woes of private enterprise think top-down regulation is the answer to the woes of public education. What will happen to those who can't or don't make the new regulated standards? This is not an ideological problem for me, Diane Ravitch. It's a daily heartache.

My disagreement is not with Ravitch's belief in piecemeal reform. Piecemeal is what I earn my bread at, and our educational system certainly needs reform. But it's a question of which pieces, which reforms. Under the mantle of disinterested historian, Ravitch presents a version of the recent past that lends support to a whole set of existing proposals that will drag us not so slowly off in what, I strongly believe, is the wrong direction. □

OUR UNIONS ARE UNDER ATTACK *(continued from page 136)*

---

as they once did. American supremacy has passed, Japan and others can make cars, TV sets, appliances, cameras, and so on better and cheaper than we used to do.

The result predicted is fewer and lower-paying jobs for workers and their unions. Is this a problem for labor alone, or for America? If high unemployment, underemployment, low pay, diminished opportunities for the young, and a reduced middle class become permanent structural conditions, what kind of country will it be?

A common error is to separate these problems as labor's problems and challenge the unions, "What are you going to do about it?" The real question is, What are the American people going to do? Can they recognize what's happening to them, or do they believe their president that we're on the way to an economic recovery and peace through overarming?

In a dialogue with me for the *Public Employee Press*, our union's newspaper, Michael Harrington was asked about the future of the labor movement. His answer was sturdy, optimistic. Whether more or less than before, some 20 million workers organized in unions, 16 million in the AFL–CIO, will remain a potent institution for years to come. In absolute terms, their political impact, their treasuries, their personpower will continue to pack a wallop that will be hard for politicians, companies, or governmental arms to ignore.

We can share this view and still be concerned about undeniable facts. One, labor can never escape its environment. The employer, whether U.S. Steel, Chrysler, or New York City, holds trump cards. If U.S. Steel decides there are more profits to be made by closing plants, the union is powerless to prevent the closings. If Chrysler and New York City maneuver themselves to the brink of bankruptcy and workers are given a choice of givebacks or layoffs, there's really no choice, either.

As steel, auto, and city services decline so does America, not just the individual work forces. As the decline spreads to major components of the American economy, as the government misdirects resources and priorities and fails to redesign a new economy for the new period we have entered, we are cementing deficiencies that will affect America for generations.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The mindless left slips their pamphlets into union meetings with calls for general strikes to recapture the country. Good friends tell unions we have to find new answers. Pundits, students, and critics recite the familiar litany of the unions' problems.

The problems exist. The Greyhound strike, PATCO, the Continental Airlines bankruptcy, the serious number of failed elections and decertifications illustrate that the union movement has not yet developed the sophistication and energy to meet the attacks that management lawyers, consultants, and public-relations specialists have learned to mount. Greyhound paid no price, or a very little price, for its insidious attempt to bust its employee union. The company violated the spirit of collective bargaining by combining its either/or offer of cutbacks with nationwide ads to hire scabs. In a time of high unemployment, Greyhound deliberately set out to pit desperate poor against its workers, with no conscience or concern for short- and long-term effects.

LABOR'S RESPONSE was inadequate. A profitable $5 billion conglomerate blackmailed a weak union into a horrible cutback. They established a precedent that most certainly is being reviewed in board meetings throughout industry. Greyhound was vulnerable to a sharp public-opinion campaign as a company to be shunned, especially by working people and others who make up their ridership. Their success and labor's failure to retaliate appropriately will encourage additional, similar union-busting efforts.

The leaders of labor do not reflect the dramatic changes in the labor market. The movement from blue-collar to service, the rising number of women and minority workers, and the growth of public-sector employment are not proportionately evident in labor's upper levels. This is a problem for the growth and spirit of the movement.

Labor's greatest gains were achieved in the 1930s when millions of workers could identify with unions as "us" against "them." The growth of unionism in the public sector through the 1960s and early '70s was equally a product of unionism in tune with the mood and needs of a working population. As the awareness grew that public employees were "workers," too, old attitudes paled before urgent needs for money and protection. Hundreds of thousands of civil servants took their new militancy into vigorous public-sector unions.

The union movement today does not have this root connection with millions of unorganized workers. Animosity and distrust, bred by generations of exclusiveness, instinctively distance many black, Hispanic, and other minority groups, including women. Whether the result of history or of selective treatment in the media and in education, millions of workers hold low, cynical opinions about unions. They remain vulnerable to a management line that "the union just wants your dues."

BUT THERE ARE HEALTHY INDICATORS, too. Public-sector workers continue to choose unionization by the hundreds of thousands. AFSCME and SEIU have recently been voted in by large numbers of public workers. The AFL–CIO is paying more attention to the need to organize. In the Southwest, unions are cooperating with each other on organizing drives. The AFL–CIO, too, is starting to catch up to the technology and potential of today's communications.

The AFL–CIO position on Mondale has demonstrated and reminded all concerned that labor is a major player in national politics. And the 400,000 trade unionists who marched into Washington on the first Solidarity Day in 1981 were the first to break the myth about Ronald Reagan's invincibility. That march snapped congressional Democrats out of the compliant trance they had gone into with Reagan's election. Solidarity Day gave courage to till-then-silent Democrats and even Republicans who finally found critical voices.

There is no scientific documentation for this, but I feel certain that the labor movement, through its own press and its public and internal actions, has been the single most effective critic of this president. Millions of American unionists have read and heard a constant, clear-cut documentation from their unions of the attitudes and actions of this Administration, from Reaganomics to El Salvador.

And in spite of recessions, givebacks and layoffs, unions continue to do their bread-and-butter business for their millions of members, protecting workers on the job, assuring wages and benefits to workers and their families.

So labor is "under attack." But neither the attack nor the times are so remarkable that I worry about the survival of the American trade union movement. No question, we could do better. The union movement is slow and grudging in its response to the challenges of the times.

But as long as there are salaried workers, and as long as America remains a democratic society, we can be confident that the American worker will recognize the unique value of the trade union. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nicolaus Mills

Reaganizing Hollywood

In 1983 Ronald Reagan did as president what he had never been able to do as an actor—he had a significant impact on the movie industry. Not that the president got the Reagan equivalent of *PT–109* produced or that his constant moralizing forced Hollywood to cut back on its usual amount of sex and violence. Reagan's success was more complete than that. American film-makers, liberals as well as conservatives, produced a series of films in 1983 that in effect endorsed the premises on which his Administration rests. Ideas the president has been struggling to get accepted ever since he took office became subjects Hollywood was sure would hold an audience.

THE 1960S WERE A FRAUD: This perspective, more than any other, shapes the president's view of recent American history. In his attacks on poverty programs, environmental controls, the Civil Rights Commission, he has not simply been trying to slow the liberalism of the 1960s—but to eradicate it altogether. In his mind the 1960s were a fraud, at best a period of naive idealism. In 1983 Hollywood went along with that conviction not in a conservative film but in a film, Lawrence Kasdan's *The Big Chill*, that in its musical score and ambience seemed to celebrate the 1960s. Like John Sayles's 1980 *The Return of the Secaucus Seven*, this film takes as its starting point a gathering of '60s friends a decade or so after college. But unlike Sayles's people—who as social workers, inner-city teachers, and Senate aides have quietly pursued their old battles—Kasdan's characters have made it big since their undergraduate days at the University of Michigan. They are TV stars, *People* magazine writers, doctors, lawyers for the rich.

Have they sold out? They struggle to answer this question when they come together for the funeral of a friend who has committed suicide. But most telling about their struggle is that it's undertaken without a clear understanding of what they ever did to make the question valid. Only the film's rock music and the pot that gets smoked give a hint of what the 1960s were like for Kasdan's characters. It is at first an omission that seems like a director's oversight. But as *The Big Chill* develops, it becomes clear that the omission is not a fault at all. It is an explanation.

The 1960s were, we're made to realize, essentially a counterculture event for Kasdan's people: a time of good sex, good feelings, good talk about protest. One of them, in the fashion of Ernest Hemingway's Jake Barnes, has been wounded in Vietnam, but the rest bear no scars. No wonder that their uneasiness with their present success comes across as hip modesty they will soon get over. They have, by comparison with their past, finally latched on to something solid. A flashback, a vivid memory of the 1960s as a time of turmoil, might cast serious doubt on their current lives. But nothing so substantial is forthcoming. For the men and women of *The Big Chill*, the 1960s were a time to grow out of, and in the end the message the film conveys is a parallel one. The 1960s, it implicitly argues, were a period of historical adolescence. There is no need to mourn its passing, and the lesson to be drawn is that real life means settling for the practical.

1960S IDEALISM WON'T WORK NOW: By suggesting that the 1960s were a fraud—and at the same time glorifying its wit and music—*The Big Chill* scores the kinds of political points no ideologically conservative film could. The same is true for the statement Mike Nichols's *Silkwood* makes about the relevance of 1960s idealism in the 1980s. *Silkwood* has the potential for being another *Norma Rae* in the story it tells about a young woman who becomes a union organizer. In Meryl Streep's haunting portrayal of Karen Silkwood, we have a character who combines self-interest and heroism by acting upon her belief that the Kerr-McGee pluto-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nium plant where she works is endangering its workers.

But the Karen Silkwood of Mike Nichols's film is quickly reduced to a woman who is victimized at every step once she lets her idealism get the best of her. Her boyfriend leaves her because he thinks she is spending too much time on union business. Her national union is more interested in winning a representation election than in protecting its workers. And her fellow workers resent Karen for putting their jobs in jeopardy by exposing plant mismanagement. Pity is what *Silkwood* arouses: pity for Karen's trappedness, pity for her "loose" sex life, pity for her getting in over her head. At the end we are not surprised when Karen is killed in a car crash en route to meet with a *New York Times* reporter and tell what she knows about Kerr-McGee safety violations.

Everything that has occurred up to this point has suggested the futility of acting on one's own best instincts. Karen has gotten what anyone trying alone to buck the system can expect. To be sure, in Karen's case, where there is an indication that she may have been run off the road by someone from Kerr-McGee, the penalties are far more extreme than those the Reagan administration (with its threats of firings and lie-detector tests) wants to hand out to employees who talk out of turn to reporters. But the moral is the same. Those who go too far are sure to be squashed, and if we look closely at their idealism, we're sure to find it flawed.

DON'T TRUST YOUR GOVERNMENT: Where do you turn when, like Karen Silkwood, you can't make it on your own? One logical answer would seem to be the government. It is big and powerful and elected. But in the 1983 world of Ronald Reagan and Hollywood, the government cannot be trusted to act with efficiency or sensitivity. No current film makes this point more emphatically than Philip Kaufman's *The Right Stuff*.

The Right Stuff, like the Tom Wolfe best-seller on which it is based, is an account of the government's Project Mercury, which in 1962 put John Glenn into orbit and succeeded in wiping out the propaganda advantage the Russians had gained in the late 1950s with Sputnik. But what gives *The Right Stuff* its edge, keeps it from lapsing into a tedious docudrama, is the struggle it depicts between a bungling American government and seven feisty astronauts, doing their best to live up to the image of America's greatest test pilot, Chuck Yeager.

It is the government, especially NASA, that has "the wrong stuff." Not only is it inept in rocketry (we see a montage of Mercury launch failures midway through *The Right Stuff*); most of all, it is oblivious to the human side of the space program. The government subjects the astronauts to gratuitous stress tests, treats them like lab animals, and when they are successful, exploits them like movie stars.

By contrast, it's the astronauts who make the Mercury program a success and give it a humanness the public can identify with. They insist that the Mercury spacecraft have manual controls and a window in its capsule. They defy officials who fail to respect their privacy (notably a buffoonish Lyndon Johnson). And above all, they endure inhuman demands with good humor (a request for a sperm specimen is complied with in a scene in which two astronauts masturbate in adjoining toilet stalls while humming *The Marine Corps Battle Hymn*).

For an Administration desperate to "get the government off our backs," the implications of *The Right Stuff* are perfect. For they show how wasteful and unfeeling the most patriotic of government programs can be, and without even venturing an overt opinion, they raise the next logical question: What can we expect from government programs—urban renewal, welfare, Medicare—tied to ambiguous political goals and subject to federal and local bureaucracies?

TRUST AUTHENTIC POWER: The ultimate heroism of *The Right Stuff* is summed up by the cool of John Glenn, who in the final scenes of the film behaves with grace and precision when confronted with the possibility that his rocket may have lost its heat shield. He proves trustworthy where officialdom is not, and in so doing embodies the qualities that give Project Mercury its authentic Americanism. For a Reagan administration committed to law and order, such a vision of heroism is essential, but in 1983 films its most articulate representative is not the boyish John Glenn of *The Right Stuff* but the grim Clint Eastwood of the Eastwood-directed *Sudden Impact*. As Harry Callahan, a homicide detective with the San Francisco police department, Eastwood lives in a world where law administered in accord with government rules cannot work. It sets criminals free on technicalities. It hamstrings investigations of known mobsters. It fails to avenge those who are the victims of crime.

In *Sudden Impact* the only choice for someone committed to law and order is to violate the law in the name of higher justice, and this is what Eastwood's Harry does. He shoots rather than captures robbers. He humiliates gangsters who think their lawyers can protect them, and in the end he know-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ingly sets free a woman who has been systematically murdering (she shoots them in the genitals) the gang who raped her and her sister. Harry is pursuing vigilante justice, and nobody knows it better than he. He delights in being called a dinosaur and in baiting the officials in his department who want results but refuse to do what is "necessary" to get them.

For Eastwood's Harry it is not, however, enough to be a dispenser of justice. He is not content to be the laconic, macho detective he was in such 1970s films as *Dirty Harry* and *Magnum Force*. This time around, he is a philosopher as well. Even in his romantic scenes with Sondra Locke, the avenging rape victim he lets go free, Eastwood cannot stop talking politics. His old-fashioned views on criminal justice win her heart, and when the two of them go to bed together, it is the union of avenging souls (we don't so much as see a kiss). In the end, however, what's most telling about *Sudden Impact* is that Harry never doubts he's right, and we are never given a hint that society could be endangered by his violent brand of justice. On the contrary, Eastwood as director portrays Harry's fight as the fight of the true American, unafraid to use the power at his disposal. In miniature it is the battle of a president who cannot bother getting congressional approval to invade a country, who knows we are threatened everywhere by outlaw states, and who knows there is only one way to deal with such nations: get them before they get us.

BE A SUPPLY-SIDE HERO: In the age of Reagan, the Harry Callahans will always be admired. But they cannot be imitated by ordinary folk, especially the affluent professional class that forms part of President Reagan's constituency. For them, a smoother kind of hero is needed. He must be hip, witty, and at the same time ruled by a desire for money. In Paul Brickman's *Risky Business*, the teen-age version of that hero emerges as Tom Cruise's Joel Goodsen. The antithesis of the questioning figure Dustin Hoffman played more than a decade ago in *The Graduate*, Joel is a young man unconcerned about self-discovery. It is girls and getting into Princeton that rule his dreams, and until his parents leave him alone in their suburban home, he seems likely to miss out on both.

Then everything changes. Joel becomes involved with Lana, a beautiful Chicago call girl, and when after a series of misadventures they both find themselves desperately in need of money, Joel turns his parents' North Shore home into a brothel. A stroke of genius! Joel comes up with all the money he needs; Princeton takes him (on the recommendation of an admissions officer who gets serviced by one of Lana's friends), and Joel is changed into a confident young man. In the film's climactic scene he stands before a high school assembly of Future Enterprisers and smugly announces, "My name is Joel Goodsen. I deal in human fulfillment. I made $8,000 in one night." It is a moment with all the potential in the world for liberal irony, and in the original script of *Risky Business* Joel's announcement was to occur after Lana betrayed him and Princeton rejected him.

But in the *Risky Business* that finally got produced, Joel's Free Enterpriser speech is protrayed as a triumph. He has outsmarted his nagging parents, his dull classmates, and he's off to Princeton with Lana. He has become, in the words of film critic David Denby, the perfect supply-side hero. In an America beset by economic turmoil, Joel has shown that there is always room for venture capitalism. All we have to remember is that where there's a need, there's a profit to be made. The rest, especially the human cost, will take care of itself.

THAT HOLLYWOOD should be so attuned to national politics is hardly surprising. It is an old habit, and in the years since World War II it has been reflected in films of every political stripe: from Marlon Brando as "friendly witness" in the McCarthy era's *On the Waterfront* to the government as bloodthirsty killers in the Vietnam era's *Bonnie and Clyde*. But what is so different—and alarming—about Hollywood's 1983 pro-Reagan films is their range. They have not simply latched on to a corner of the president's thinking. They have captured the ideas on which his Administration rests and put them in the best possible light. No president could ask for more. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

George McAlmon

So Callous a Nation

Haitians are so far down on their luck that if a world prize existed for the most hapless people, they would be edged out on a technicality by perhaps the Chads or Bangladeshis. Haiti, for most of its population, is a prison farm guarded against sea escape by the U.S. Navy and from within by constant military-police surveillance.

Last June I traveled with some friends about 600 miles up and down Haiti, almost to the Dominican mountain border. Before leaving the United States, we had interviewed Haitian exiles in New York, Washington and Miami, and also the Haitian Desk officer and a deputy in the Human Rights section of the U.S. State Department. On our 180-mile trip to Cap-Haïtien, our van was stopped five times and passengers were thoroughly checked by soldiers, police, or the blue-shirted Macoutes. Once I promptly cleared a hotel dining room of all present, including waiters, by foolishly asking a Haitian friend at an adjoining table if anybody knew the whereabouts of Sylvio Claude.

Haitian per-capita income is less than a dollar per day. An assembly job with an American company pays about $16 for a 48-hour week. There are, for the general public, almost no medical services or schools. Illiteracy is about 80 percent. While watching people in the street markets and along the roadways, we first sensed something absent until we finally realized that older people were missing—there are no older people. Life expectancy is 45 years. Nature or the voodoo hougan-mambo cures sick Haitians; or they simply die. Many die in childhood. Infant mortality is 130 per 1000 during the first year. The U.S. rate is 14 per 1000, and in nearby Cuba it is 25 per 1000. Everywhere in Haiti are signs of disfiguring disease and malnutrition, especially in the children. Fruits and vegetables appear in the markets, but there are few protein items—little meat, poultry, fish, or even beans. Stinking dried animal entrails sometimes are spread out for sale.

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, MEDICAL SERVICES, autos, and trips abroad are enjoyed by the moneyed class, an extremely small portion of the nation—certainly less than 1 percent. Its modern homes and mansions are on view in Pétionville, located on high, cooler ground above the steam-bath climate of the capital.

The gross thievery and mismanagement of the Jean Claude Duvalier regime—his family and intimates—may just be the world's worst. From the meager national product the ruling coterie systematically skims and steals a considerable part of the profits, and then exports its loot for investment abroad. One Haitian intellectual told us, "The country's economy would benefit more than it has from all foreign grants if the gang would just invest its cache at home, but it never will; they are too afraid." Duvalier's foreign deposits are estimated at $400 million. The crass palace of "President for Life" Duvalier occupies six square immaculate, patrolled blocks in otherwise teeming Port au Prince. The rear of the palace is not visible where it merges into the National Army Headquarters compound.

Besides its corruption, the Duvalier dictatorship is guilty of obvious mismanagement. Garbage and open sewage are everywhere. Modern streets, lighting, public schools and clinics are almost nonexistent. There are only about 400 miles of paved roads. The mountain slopes, deforested for charcoal, are now eroded and mostly unplanted. Haiti has about 980 miles of seashore, but no commercial fishing industry. Mail delivery can take months. No sizable business operates in Haiti without participation by the ruling group.

Haiti is not a happy place for foreign companies. We were told that the Duvalier group requires up-front cash before a foreign enterprise can even start to do business. It seems that Duvalier does not really care about new foreign industry: it might in some ways spoil his private preserve. Half of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

national product and 80 percent of the work force are based on agriculture, yet the country does not grow enough food to support itself. Large unfarmed stretches in the valley of the Artibonite River are said to belong to the Duvalier group, which has for unknown reasons failed to cultivate the area for several years.

While official corruption impedes business, the Haitian labor market should be a manufacturer's paradise. The country is covered border-to-border with people (about 6 million), with a high annual growth rate of 2.5 percent in an area the size of Maryland. Everywhere we went on the island there were people in sight, walking and carrying. The Dominican Republic has closed the overland exodus route except to temporary contract laborers, and since 1981 the U.S. naval blockade has closed the sea escape route. An estimated 80,000 Haitians entered the U.S. illegally in 1980, enough to hold the population at close to a zero-growth level. Haiti has no social services, no minimum wage, no social security, no assistance for on-the-job injuries or pensions of any kind. Neither workers nor anybody else can organize for any purpose, and there are no labor unions or worker bargaining units. The Haitian labor pool is helpless, captive, and not much different (just larger) than it was 200 years ago under French masters.

Human rights, as defined by the Helsinki Accords of 1975 and the International Bill of Human Rights passed by the United Nations, are nonexistent except for freedom of religion. No private criticism, political meeting, media announcement, or public protest is permitted under threat of arrest, torture, and death. That political prisoners have been reduced to about a score is no sign of improvement, but evidence that the domestic opposition again has been terrorized into silence.

The U.S. State Department Haitian office describes the relationship between the two governments as "friendly." The State Department Human Rights office acknowledges violations of human rights in Haiti but has no plan for any change of relationship between the governments. Both offices express pride that Duvalier has permitted municipal elections in Port au Prince and Cap-Haïtien. Haitians at home and in the U.S. say the municipal elections are meaningless since no candidate can express an unfavorable comment about the government.

FOR THE U.S., Haiti is not just another desperately poor, small country. With Cuba controlling the west side, Haiti controls the east side of the 70-mile-wide Windward Passage, through which most ships sail to and from Atlantic seaports and the Panama Canal. With its strategic location principally in mind, the U.S. Marines occupied Haiti between 1915 and 1934 (incidentally without any noticeable progressive influence).

U.S. policy for Haiti is strictly "business as usual." Our aid and demands are both low. We can, however, exercise extraordinary power in the relationship, as evidenced by our 1981 agreement with Duvalier permitting us to commit the humiliating act of stopping and boarding Haitian-flagged ships on the high seas to search for escapees and drugs. The only recent difference in policy is President Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative announced in February 1982 and covering 28 countries, including Haiti. The Initiative program awarded Haiti $10 million in aid, which has now been paid, with a portion presumably in a Swiss account. The State Department Haitian office could not tell me what the Initiative money was spent on.

Another part of the Initiative (if passed by Congress) will grant favorable import-export and tax breaks to American companies opening assembly plants in Haiti. The Haitian labor market is so pitifully defenseless that world-roving American assembly plants will give some temporary employment until transferred to other more cost-favorable nations; but the operation of the plants will be extractive and not a progressive or permanent influence.

Part of our present policy is to restrain refugee Haitians in the U.S. who attempt to organize opposition to the Duvalier regime. An expatriates' radio station beamed from the U.S. to Haiti was closed long ago. Efforts to infiltrate back to Haiti are stopped by the Naval blockade. The comforting security of White House backing allows Duvalier to operate his nationwide slave-plantation system without hope for improvement for the Haitians. U.S. policy makes no call upon the Haitian government for a free national election, such as we made in El Salvador. Nor have we leveled any sanctions for the constant, ongoing violations of human rights as we did against Poland, Cuba, and Nicaragua.

There is now a patriotic, capable revolutionary leadership among the 800,000 Haitian expatriates, most of whom live in the U.S. Exiles report that there are about 5,000 Haitians in Cuba training for a return. On the present course a revolution would resemble those of Nicaragua, Cuba, Iran, and Ethiopia. I have found no Haitian within or without the country who believes that Haiti can be put on a track toward respect for human rights and an improved economy by working through Duvalier.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

All are of the opinion that no constructive change can occur until Duvalier and his gang are removed.

The Duvalier government is aligned with the U.S., does not threaten "free enterprise," readily accedes to all our requests, and costs us little. Consequently our relations are "friendly" and Duvalier is left free to commit any kind of atrocity. The U.S. attitude will contribute to eventual violent upheaval in nations like Haiti. A Haitian teacher asked us, "How can Americans be so decent as individuals and so callous as a nation?"

By now we should know that nations such as Haiti, with a precarious imbalance between a few extremely rich and the many poor held in place by military dictatorships, are hazardous footing for alliances. It may be vastly cheaper and easier to assist the Haitians now than to suffer the trauma and huge expense of a Nicaraguan or Salvadoran type of situation later.

WOULD IT NOT BE WISE for the U.S. before the pressure cooker explodes in Haiti to assist its people to reach some higher economic level combined with some human liberty? A mini-Marshall Plan could finance new home-owned industries, such as commercial fishing and improved medical services, education, and road construction. We might even realize some repayment of the money loaned. The U.S. would then be in a position to guide Haitians along the path to freedom.

It can be expected that the restructuring required to wrench Haiti from its abysmal economic pit will inevitably include some socialistic practices, such as the nationalization of the Duvalier properties and businesses, the use of a national plan, and national financing. This is not a task that free enterprise alone has successfully handled in other poor countries. Our present policy of obsessive hostility toward socialist economics needs to be relaxed.

U.S. policy has been directed at an unproductive and phony contest over economic systems, and so diverted from the meaningful contest for the freedom of peoples. The economic system of a country should not be our concern, so long as the citizens of that country are on the road to or have achieved liberty. Such a policy is no plan to go easy on the Soviet Union, but quite the opposite—it could be the most effective countermove.

An urgent problem is how to withdraw our support from a dozen or so abjectly oppressive governments (as that in Haiti) while gaining the good will of the citizenry who have reason enough to resent our present policies. We surely will reap a harvest of ill will from the seeds of our support for totalitarian governments, an inevitable consequence. The only decent policy would be to let the citizens of each nation, by trial, error, internal struggle, revolution, and competition eventually adopt a government and economic system of popular choice. As we refrain from participating in the internal struggle of a nation, we should also oppose participation by any other state.

How would Haiti fare under a proposed change of policy? U.S. supply to Haiti of military-related equipment or personnel must immediately be stopped. Haiti has so many basic needs that it's a tough choice where to start. The Duvalier government could be approached with specific proposals for the construction of paved roads, and the development of schools and clinics. The proposals would be backed by U.S.-guaranteed loans but conditional on prompt and actual liberalization of human rights in all areas. A first step must be to permit freedom of speech, including the rights to meet, organize, publish, distribute, and broadcast without harassment. Expatriates must be permitted to return home without risk. The chances are good that given 60 days of freedom in Haiti, Duvalier and his crowd would voluntarily depart from the island. If Duvalier refuses to permit change, then all offers should be withdrawn and his government left without U.S. support, and diplomatic relations should then be severed. Indeed, because of our predominant trade position, a

Wigan Pier in 1984 . . .

WIGAN, England, Dec. 20, 1983 (Reuters) — The bleak industrial town of Wigan plans to erect a memorial to George Orwell during 1984 and refurbish the drab pier that the writer made world-famous.

Far from feeling offended by the depressing portrait of the Lancashire town painted by Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, his 1936 picture of working-class life, modern Wigan plans to exploit its Orwell connection for tourism.

With government help it plans to spend $3 million to renovate the pier, an industrial coal chute jutting into the Leeds-to-Liverpool canal, to attract both tourists and business clients. The tourist board has begun to advertise holidays in Wigan and the town is contributing to a statue of the writer. . . .

Wigan Pier had long been a music-hall joke when Orwell chose it to symbolize the contrast between the dreary life of industrial workers and the fun of elegant seaside piers.

—*New York Times*, December 21, 1983 □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

United States embargo applied to Haiti could cause a change of government.

In this alternative situation Haiti would be left to boil with the hope that democratic-reform movements would arise to challenge Duvalier, and the U.S. should aid these movements even though they often will be socialist. We should not take sides among the reform groups, but continue to urge full protection of human rights. We should resist any Soviet intervention into Haiti or any Soviet-controlled Haitian revolutionary unit.

Our best hope for survival as a free nation may be to support and build upon an alliance of economically successful democracies. Haiti could be an excellent starting point for making that idea a reality. □

Irving Howe

Again: Orwell and the Neoconservatives

In the Winter 1984 *Dissent*, Mr. Gordon Beadle has what I take to be a definitive refutation of the effort made by some neoconservative writers, notably Norman Podhoretz, to "kidnap" George Orwell for their side. Mr. Beadle shows with precise documentation what could be documented several times over: that to the end of his life Orwell remained a writer of the left who—as writers of the left should—frequently criticized the mistakes, myths, and occasional foolishness of the left.

But if the matter of Orwell's explicit opinions must be regarded as settled, there is another and, from a literary point of view, more interesting question. Let us assume a neoconservative of subtle literary habits who says, "Well, yes, of course, Podhoretz is crude and Orwell was—consciously—a man of the left; but we all know that works of fiction often escape the intentions of their authors and can be read as sustaining world outlooks they might not care to endorse. And that's the claim we neoconservatives make for *1984*, not that it was written with the intent of supporting conservatism but that, in its penetration and honesty regarding the total state, it necessarily comes down on the conservative side. . . . "

Now this would be an interesting case for a neoconservative critic to make, though I feel no further obligation to show him or her how to make it. It would be an interesting case, for one thing, because critics of leftward inclination, like Philip Rahv and me, have made a similar case with regard to writers of rightist opinion. Both Rahv and I wrote essays a good many years ago about Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* in which we argued that, while Dostoevsky began with the deliberate purpose of making a reactionary case, something else happened when he actually wrote the book. The play of his imagination, the reach of his sympathies, and the force of his memories about his youthful radicalism all came together to make the novel far more than the "tract" Dostoevsky said he would have been content to write. Indeed, the criticisms launched in *The Possessed* proceed in all directions—toward the right, the left, the center. No one is spared, and no one cast into outer darkness.

COULD THEN A SIMILAR CASE be made by a conservative critic with regard to *1984*?

I think not. What makes *The Possessed* so great a work of fiction is its plasticity of representation, its restlessness of perspective, its willingness sympathetically to enter the minds even of the characters it mocks, and its intimate knowledge of the milieu it burlesques. The author of this great novel is not just the older, reactionary Dostoevsky; he is also the younger, radical Dostoevsky. Insofar as Dostoevsky's opinions melt into the flow of his fiction and it becomes harder and harder to know with whom his sympathies lie, precisely to that extent does *The Possessed* become a masterpiece.

Now *1984* may also be called a masterpiece, but surely of a lower order than *The Possessed*. For where Dostoevsky's book is so wonderfully plastic, Orwell's book—through the sheer tyrannical force of his subject—must be fiercely rigid. Dostoevsky's characters are still suffering, thinking, feeling men and women, while *1984* projects a world in which the *idea* of the human must be recalled, retrieved by its forlorn hero.

In my judgment, then, it isn't possible to make out a case that *1984* can be read as a conservative fiction, whatever that might mean, any more than it's possible to make out a case that it can be read as a socialist fiction, whatever *that* might mean. *1984* stands blocklike in its admonitory force, and from it we must all draw whatever political or philosophical conclusions we can. On its own, the book offers no way out of our century's ordeals; it merely reminds us where they might end. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

George M. Fredrickson

A Remarkable American Woman

LYDIA MARIA CHILD: SELECTED LETTERS, 1817–1880, edited by Milton Meltzer and Patricia G. Holland; Francine Krasno, Associate Editor. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press. 583 pp. $35.00.

Lydia Maria Child was one of the most remarkable American women of the 19th century. An author and reformer, she wrote extensively on social and cultural issues, was active in the antislavery movement, and supported women's rights. Her literary output was enormous and included novels, children's books, historical-philosophical works, humanitarian tracts, and thousands of letters.

She is best remembered as a major publicist for the cause of immediate black emancipation. In 1833 she published *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*, which ranks among the most persuasive and influential of abolitionist writings. For two years (1841–43) she served as editor of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the organ of the American Anti-Slavery Society. But bitter factionalism among abolitionists made a misery of her attempt to convey the essential antislavery message to a broad middle-class audience, and she resigned in despair, not merely from the editorship but also from organized abolitionism.

Child reemerged as an antislavery militant during the sectional crisis of the 1850s and drew national attention when she offered to nurse the wounded John Brown as he awaited execution in a Virginia jail after his raid on Harper's Ferry. For the rest of her long life (she died in 1880 at the age of 78), she devoted most of her energy and literary effort to the cause of black freedom and equality.

This admirable selection from Child's letters, skillfully edited, introduced, and annotated by Milton Meltzer and Patricia G. Holland, provides ample evidence of her zeal on behalf of Afro-American liberation. It also shows that she had many other things on her mind. Her opinions on a wide range of subjects exemplify the strengths and weaknesses of the mid-Victorian humanitarian sensibility and include some especially revealing reflections on the role or place of women in American society.

"I form opinions decisively, on what seem to me sufficient grounds," she wrote late in life, "and then I stick to them pertinaciously." What strikes the modern reader is not only the vigor and forthrightness of her views but also how well informed and perceptive she normally was. She was essentially a popularizer rather than an original thinker, and her letters (like her published writings) normally represent rather than extend a point of view. She would have been the first to admit that she lacked the kind of intellectual depth and creativity that she admired in such contemporaries as Margaret Fuller, George Eliot, and George Sand. Despite all her romantic enthusiasms, however, she had a streak of hard-headed realism that kept her from succumbing to the kind of sentimentalism that sometimes marred the writing of other prominent female humanitarians (Harriet Beecher Stowe's, for example).

CHILD'S VIEW OF REFORM reflected the characteristic pre-Civil War notion that the only way to regenerate society was the moral suasion of individuals. "My own opinion," she wrote in 1842, "is that the perfection of the *individual* is the sure way to regenerate the *mass*." Her difficulties in acting as an official representative of the American Anti-Slavery Society were caused in part by the attitude that historian Stanley Elkins has called "anti-institutionalism." While editing the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, she wrote: "I have an increasingly uncomfortable sense of being fettered by being the organ of a *Society*. I am not certain that one *can* fill such a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

position without injury to [one's] own soul." A liberal Unitarian who disliked creeds and formal religiosity, she had as exacting a conscience and commitment to individual moral perfection as the most fervent evangelical Christian, and this concern with her own rectitude made it difficult for her to adopt expedient means for even the most exalted of ends.

Nevertheless, she did not seek to impose her perfectionist views on other abolitionists and had the sense to realize that cooperation in a good cause did not require all participants to share a single view of the proper methods to be employed. She first objected to the efforts of moderate abolitionists to eject the Garrisonian radicals from the movement because the latter refused to vote for antislavery candidates (Garrison viewed the act of voting as sinful complicity with a corrupt political system). But later, when the Garrisonians had taken control of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the moderates had withdrawn to form a new organization, she felt equally unhappy when some of the radicals sought to commit the society to the kind of nonviolent anarchism known as "nonresistance." Although she sympathized with the extreme pacifist convictions of the nonresistants, she remained firm in her belief that the only qualification for membership in the society should be a dedication to the immediate abolition of slavery, with individuals retaining freedom of choice as to methods and affiliations with other movements.

During the Civil War Child lamented the fact that emancipation came about as a "military necessity" and not because the majority had acknowledged the full humanity and equality of blacks. Yet she realized that freedom by any means was better than continued slavery, and in 1864 she supported Lincoln's reelection against a movement of antislavery purists to put up a more radical candidate. Her assessment of "the great emancipator" is worth quoting:

> Lincoln is a man of slow mind, apparently incapable of large comprehensive views. It is his nature to potter about details; in the doing of which he wastes valuable time and golden opportunities. But he is an honest man and conscientiously hates slavery.

CHILD'S PERSONAL ATTITUDE toward the blacks whose liberation she was espousing was complicated. "For myself," she wrote in 1862, "I have no prejudice against color." But modern readers are nonetheless likely to find some of her references to blacks insufferably condescending or paternalistic. In 1842, for example, she described the black abolitionist Charles Remond as "the first colored person I have met, who seemed to be altogether such an one as I would have him. He carries ballast enough for his sails; and that is unusual." Later she used the same nautical metaphor to commend Frederick Douglass for being another atypical "colored man." She also argued, in contrast to some of the more optimistic abolitionists, that it would take generations for freed blacks to shake off the degradation and bad habits engendered by slavery. But it would be anachronistic to label her a white supremacist because of such opinions.

Her letters show that she persistently denounced racial prejudice and all forms of discrimination. Her own biases seem to have been mainly those of class and culture rather than race. She had a longstanding devotion to the fair treatment of Indians, despite the fact that she acknowledged "considerable repugnance toward them" (principally because of what she took to be their warlike habits). The Chinese, on the other hand, aroused her unqualified admiration—"their industry and patience will prove a blessing to this country"—and she raised a lonely voice in the 1870s against efforts to restrict Asian immigration. It is fair to say that she evaluated individuals and groups not by the color of their skin but in terms of how nearly they seemed to approximate the Protestant middle-class cultural ideals that inspired her humanitarian efforts.

If she carried the best values of the mid-Victorian middle class to their logical reformist conclusions, these same values prevented her from sympathizing with the struggles of working-class Americans faced with proletarianization. She opposed the eight-hour workday movement of the late 1860s as a violation of free contract and panicked when confronted with the violent railroad strikes of 1877. Deploring the "tendency toward a strong demarcation of classes in this country," she concluded that the riotous strikers "are terribly in the wrong; and there is nothing for it but to subdue them with a strong hand." She well exemplifies the argument of historian David Montgomery (in *Beyond Equality*) that labor militancy frightened most middle-class radicals and impelled them to take an increasingly conservative posture on social issues during the 1860s and '70s.

IF CHILD IS A GOOD BAROMETER of the ebb and flow of middle-class idealism and reformism in the middle decades of the 19th century, she also provides invaluable insights into the problems faced by creative and ambitious women in a male-dominated society and reveals much about the origins of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the feminist movement. As a woman without independent means, she encountered many obstacles in her efforts to pursue the only career of any dignity and prestige that was open to the women of her generation, that of a professional writer. She published her first novel at the age of 22 (in 1824) and two years later married the journalist and reformer David Child. Henceforth she was saddled with a husband who was constantly in deep financial trouble. David's bankruptcies forced Lydia to do a lot of hack writing and editing just to keep the household afloat. She eventually concluded that "my husband's deficiencies in business matters are *incurable*."

To save herself from the burden of her husband's debts and the agonies of his failures, she effected a physical and financial separation that lasted for many years. The experience caused her great pain and helped to prompt a searching examination of the institution of marriage that ultimately led to her advocacy of divorce by mutual consent. Yet she never seriously considered dissolving her own marriage. The letters suggest that she retained a strong affection for her feckless mate or at least could not free herself of a sense of wifely duty. In any case, the Childs were reunited as soon as conditions permitted.

In an eloquent letter of 1856, Lydia revealed her basic feminism when she recorded her "towering indignation" at the fact that her husband had to sign her will to make it valid. "I was not indignant for my own account," she wrote, "for David respects the freedom of all women upon principle. . . . But I was indignant for womankind made chattels personal from the beginning of time, perpetually insulted by literature, law, and custom."

Despite her feminist sentiments, Child did not assume a leading role in the women's rights movement. When some female abolitionists began to agitate for sexual equality during the 1830s, Child held back on grounds that "It is best not to *talk* about our rights, but simply go forward and *do* whatsoever we deem our duty. In toiling for the freedom of others we shall find our own." Her willingness to subordinate female emancipation to the cause of black freedom held firm throughout her career as a reformer. "The suffrage of women can better afford to wait than that of the colored people" she wrote in 1867, and two years later she denounced Elizabeth Cady Stanton for opposing the Fifteenth Amendment because it enfranchised black males while ignoring the claims of women. Although she strongly favored woman suffrage, she lent her support to those who said that Reconstruction was "the Negro's hour."

To some extent Child's willingness to postpone strong advocacy of women's rights until blacks were secure in theirs reflected the "domestic feminist" view that women revealed their superiority to men by demonstrating a greater capacity for self-sacrifice. But sometimes she wrote in an ambivalent way about the emotionalism attributed to women by this ideology of sex differences. When informed in 1855 that the critics of a work on religious ideas that she had published anonymously could not decide whether the author was a man or a woman, she replied with ironic self-deprecation: "I have been such a fool, such a slave, of my *affections*, all my life long, that *I* know very well that I am very *much* of a woman. I am more doubtful whether I partake much of the manly nature. I admire a manly woman though I dislike a *masculine* one." In 1867 she concluded that the whole issue of whether there were inherent differences between the male and female character was moot: "It is vain to speculate about the *nature* of woman, so long as her nature is every way repressed by false customs, which men perpetuate for their own convenience, and then quarrel with the consequences."

Perhaps she should have left it at that. But toward the end of her life she returned to the question. She could not leave it alone, because it involved the understanding of her own identity as a woman who had no wish to deny her gender but had, in her role as an intellectual and reformer, intruded into what was generally considered "the male sphere." Her final solution was androgynous: "I think every individual, and every society, is perfected just in proportion to the combination, and cooperation, of masculine and feminine elements of character. He is the most perfect man who is affectionate as well as intellectual; and she is the most perfect woman who is intellectual as well as affectionate." The last clause might have been her epitaph. □

Re: Letters

- Dissent *welcomes letters, but we must ask that they be kept within bounds, about 225 words. They must be typed, double-spaced, and carry the full address and name of the sender. We reserve the right to edit letters down to fit our space and to choose which shall be printed. Letters will not be returned to senders unless they are accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes.*
- *Thank you for your kind cooperation.* □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jan Rosenberg
and Fred Siegel

Fighting Over the Family

THE HEARTS OF MEN: AMERICAN DREAMS AND THE FLIGHT FROM COMMITMENT, by Barbara Ehrenreich. New York: Anchor/Doubleday. 206 pp. $13.95.

THE WAR OVER THE FAMILY: CAPTURING THE MIDDLE GROUND, by Brigitte Berger and Peter Berger. New York: Anchor/Doubleday. 252 pp. $14.95.

In spite of endless analyses and premature obituaries, the subject of the American family continues to draw on a seemingly bottomless well of feelings. Barbara Ehrenreich's witty and original account of contemporary antifamily attitudes and Brigitte and Peter Berger's measured neoconservative account of class, culture, and beliefs about the family provide sharply different explanations for the current conflicts over the family.

In *The Hearts of Men,* Barbara Ehrenreich argues that it was the previously neglected "male revolt" of the 1950s, centered in *Playboy*, the Beat writers, and the medical profession—but *not* feminism—that initiated the contemporary attack on the family. The bulk of her book is an engaging but highly selective description of diverse though, in retrospect, complementary antifemale and antifamily ideas that appeared in opposition to the predominant profamily ideology of the 1950s.

Ehrenreich begins with the "gray-flannel dissidents," "trapped" in their well-paying professional and managerial careers and posh suburban homes, chafing at the conformity of their lives. Their quiet doubts quickly gave way to *Playboy*'s clamorous attacks on wives (depicted as grasping and greedy) and the family. Next came the Beat poets and writers, the "apotheosis of male criticism." Rejecting both family and work, Jack Kerouac, Neal Cassady, and others smashed the cornerstone of the traditional American family: the breadwinner ethic and the "family-wage system." Enter, finally, the medical establishment, alarmed by the increasing signs of male fragility relative to female strength. Men had a startlingly high incidence of heart attacks; women's life expectancy was outdistancing men's. Cardiologists and humanistic psychologists lent their professional legitimacy to the male revolt against the family. No longer were hard work and family responsibility the compelling values they once had been. In fact, working too hard was deemed unhealthy! Here was the *coup de grace* to the breadwinner ethic and the family-wage system on which women depended. Into the void marched self-expression and personal development, extreme formulations of the individualism at the heart of bourgeois culture.

Lest you miss the point. . . . By arguing that men, throughout the 1950s, had articulated an attack on the family, Ehrenreich strains to exonerate feminists from the charge that it was the women's movement (of the '60s and '70s) that undermined the family. Not feminists, she assures us, but men first laid bare the oppressive, confining "roles" (always in quotes for Ehrenreich) within the nuclear family. "The great irony," she asserts, ". . . is that the right-wing, anti-feminist backlash that emerged in the 1970s is a backlash not so much against feminism as against the male revolt." Once again the oppressed have been outwitted by their oppressors—divided against each other instead of confronting the *real* enemy.

Ehrenreich charts the intersections of these ideas with great agility, but she has the wrong map. Her key intellectual coordinates are male *vs.* female; in her schema, social class/cultural differences dissolve before the enormity of gender conflict. In her eagerness to prove that men, not women, launched the attack on the family and the antifeminist politics this spawned, she draws artificial linguistic and conceptual boundaries. The male revolt *against commitment* and the feminist search *for independence* draw on common values, ideas, and sentiments. In the book's conclusion she backtracks and, damning her own argument, admits that: "If the male revolt has roots in a narcissistic consumer culture, it is equally rooted in the tradition of liberal humanism that inspires feminism." Ehrenreich can no longer deny this obvious if uncomfortable truth. Male revolt and feminism spring (in part) from the same tradition of radical individualism.

Equally vexing is the question of the breadth and depth of the male revolt. Who actually read and took to heart the attacks on the family in *Playboy,* Beat poetry, and humanistic psychology? Here Ehrenreich's ironic sympathies lead her astray when she tells us she is amazed that men have stuck to the breadwinner trap for so long. Caught up in a literal-minded reading of *Playboy*, she is unable to distinguish between schoolboy raffishness (the bulk of the *Playboy* readership were students) and rebellion. When we recently spoke with Burt Zollo, one of the writers Ehrenreich cites

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as a captain on Hefner's General Staff of the male revolt—"Hefner laid out the male strategic initiative"—about his essays deriding the marriage trap, he quickly asked that we drop the subject lest his wife get wind of what he had once said. Like Zollo, most of the privates in the male revolt failed to follow their own marching orders. Contemporary accounts of working-class and middle-class men suggest that, *Playboy* or not, the "breadwinner ethic" is still alive and well for many people in our society (though increasingly difficult to live by, given unemployment rates and wrenching economic shifts). Michael Harrington's recent article on unemployed steel workers (*Harpers*, April 1983) unearthed once again the deep sense of failure and shame brought on by unemployment—by a man's inability to support his family in the way they had all come to expect.

Typical working-class and middle-class men still see their jobs primarily as the way to provide for their families; their work derives meaning from their commitment to the breadwinner ethic. They work because they have to support their families, not for the self-fulfillment or inherent satisfaction the work affords.

Ehrenreich ignores social structure and class in most of her book, focusing instead on selected ideological and cultural contours of gender conflict. Her one discussion of class, a description of the difference between a "middle-class gaze" and a "working-class stare," approaches parody. But interestingly, she concludes with a more grounded discussion of current changes in the economy and the probable implications for women and their families. Basic economic and demographic changes (the decline of the smokestack industries, the threats posed to those in traditional occupations by the growth of new high-tech industries, and the unprecedented growth of female-headed families) now threaten families' well-being far more than any male revolt. In this concluding section Ehrenreich argues that the feminization of poverty is the product more of traditional gender-based occupational segregation than of the male revolt.

Ehrenreich seems blind to the seemingly unavoidable element of paternalism in state programs. Those who continue to value private over public life, the family over the state, are arrogantly dismissed as reactionary, backward-looking holdovers from an earlier era. She argues that

> . . . the family-wage system was itself a kind of private-sector welfare system, in which a woman's only "entitlement" was her share of her husband's wage. Those who believe it is somehow more honorable to rely on an individual than on agencies created by public wealth are, I think, simply clinging to an idealized memory of male paternalism.

Can she really mean this? The complex interchanges of material and emotional support, of the tensions between commitment to the family and pursuit of self-interest, the mix of sentiment and interest at the heart of our family norms all are flattened out and buried by this inappropriate analogy, conceived in antipathy to the experiences she's invoking.

WHERE EHRENREICH FAILS to see the ambiguities in family life, the Bergers are best at describing those complexities. In the most valuable part of their book they describe and celebrate the coexistence of opposed virtues and values (such as individualism and family-centeredness, stability and change, continuity and innovation) at the heart of the family, although in a striking omission they fail to link these values to the structure of gender roles. "The bourgeois family as an institution," they argue, "made it possible to socialize individuals with singular stable personalities ('strong characters'), who were also ready for innovation and risk-taking in a society undergoing historically unprecedented transformations." It is only in the postmodern period that the sense of balance and tensions (and the risks that these imply) has been rejected. The norm of individualism is no longer balanced with that of social responsibility, "liberation" with strong communal ties. One element has overwhelmed the previous balance, the extremes have been posed as irreconcilable alternatives.

The economy, tacked on belatedly in Ehrenreich's book, is altogether absent from the Bergers'. As in much of their writing, there is little sense that we live in a material world. For them, people live on the higher planes of values, ideas, ideologies. Their opening discussion of the contemporary war over the family draws the following battle lines: the "Critical Camp" (the feminists), the "Professionals" (those experts denounced by Christopher Lasch), and the "Neo-traditionalists" (an alliance of the old middle class, the working class, and the lower middle class). In addition to spelling out the main premises and linguistic/conceptual orthodoxies of each group, the book attempts to locate these various ideological positions in the social class structure of contemporary America.

The Bergers argue that the battle over the family is part of a much larger conflict between classes in America. The two antifamily positions (feminists and professionals) represent the interests of the ascendant "new class." This is the clear villain of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the book, struggling its way to cultural dominance in the name of such decadent values as radical individualism, instant gratification, and personal fulfillment. The profamily position of the neotraditionalists is rooted in the "politically potent alliance of the old middle class (the business class), the lower middle class, and the working class." They embody the square bourgeois virtues of thrift, responsibility, obligation, and hard work; these are the Bergers' heroes, the putative defenders of bourgeois norms and morality.

It is ironic that a book so focused on the conjunctures of social class, family structure, and ideology gives short shrift to the overall structure of the economy and, especially, to the debilitating effects on family life of long-term unemployment, underemployment, and poverty. The Bergers applaud the bourgeois virtues as if they existed in a timeless vacuum; but prolonged, structurally induced unemployment mocks the values of discipline and hard work, while taking a heavy toll on personal and, often, family life. In an inversion of Ehrenreich, who seeks to dissolve social norms and focus exclusively on observable behavior, the Bergers take the norms as tantamount to the reality. Neither approach quite gets at the complexity of our social life. □

Mark Levinson

Economics in Trouble

DANGEROUS CURRENTS: THE STATE OF ECONOMICS, by Lester Thurow. New York: Random House. 247 pp. $16.95.

Theoretical economics, for understandable reasons, is rarely a topic of public discussion. For economists, it is perhaps just as well; they are spared the task of explaining their highly abstract and often irrelevant models. But times of crisis produce demands for explanation and remedies, which in turn lead to a reexamination of the theory underlying policy prescriptions. The demands for explanation seem only reasonable since economics claims a special status among social sciences as the most "scientific." Indeed, the application of mathematics to economic theory, linear programming, input-output analysis, and econometrics is an impressive technical and analytic tool. But whether these advances in technique give us greater insight into the functioning of the economy is another question. Lester Thurow, in *Dangerous Currents*, agrees with a verdict once pronounced by Robert Heilbroner that "the prestige accorded to mathematics in economics has given it rigor but, alas, also mortis."

Thurow attempts to look behind the imposing technical apparatus of modern economics in order to expose its basic postulates, what he calls the price auction equilibrium view of the economy. This theory, first articulated over 100 years ago by the French economist Léon Walras, explains how prices (assuming perfect competition and a free market) fluctuate, rising and falling so that all markets clear. Everything is sold and everyone employed.

Thurow's argument is quite simple: the price auction equilibrium model of the economy, while internally consistent and mathematically elegant, is valueless as a guide to the actual economy. Thurow demonstrates in great detail how the economy differs from the model; what happens when policy is made according to the model; and how professional economists struggle with the contradiction between model and reality.

Orthodox economists in the midst of the Great Depression, relying on the price auction theory, believed that supply created its own demand and that capitalism automatically tended toward the full employment of labor and the full utilization of all resources—provided, of course, that the mechanism of the market was not impeded. It followed that the role of the state was to modify or remove any friction or imperfection that might prevent these inherent tendencies from working and to oppose all attempts to restrict the free play of market forces. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary—idle plant capacity, unsold surpluses, unemployed labor in massive quantities, that is, markets that were not clearing—economists clung to their model.

This was the context in which Keynes set about to revolutionize economics. He argued that demand creates its own supply and therefore government manipulation of demand is the essential prerequisite to the maintenance of full employment. Keynes believed that although the system was self-equilibrating there was no inherent tendency for the system to move toward full employment. In

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Keynes's view it was the level of investment spending planned by capitalists that was the crucial factor in determining the level of output and employment.

But as Keynes pointed out, investment plans depend on anticipation of future profits and hence are characterized by uncertainty. This led to two conclusions. First, there is nothing in the automatic mechanism of the system that would make capitalists plan just the right amount of investment to ensure full employment. Second, since expectations of future profits are volatile, investment plans and hence output and employment levels are prone to wild fluctuations. Therefore, the role of the state is to manipulate demand within a framework of progressive taxation so as to achieve full employment and steady growth.

Keynes's pathbreaking work was the high point of a number of attempts in the 1930s to bring economic theory into accord with the changing reality of capitalism. Gunnar Myrdal anticipated much of Keynes's analysis while Joan Robinson and E. H. Chamberlain rejected the equilibrium, perfect competition model and tried to develop theories of price based on imperfect and monopolistic competition. There were of course those who resisted the change. In 1939, John Hicks (later Sir John Hicks and a winner of the Nobel Prize) described the effects of the new work in economics as "the wreckage of the greater part of economic theory."

However, those who resisted the change did not have to worry long. Out of the wreckage emerged a new version of the old theory. It is important to remember that whatever the policy implications of Keynes's *General Theory* (and they were substantial), Keynes had much less of an effect on economic theory. This was in part brought about by Keynes himself:

> But if our central controls succeed in establishing an aggregate volume of output corresponding to full employment as nearly as is practicable, the classical theory comes into its own again from this point onward. . . . It is in determining the volume, not the direction of actual employment, that the existing system has broken down.

After Keynes, governments that were concerned with maintaining the level of employment had a theory to act on. But as Thurow notes,

> The Keynesian revolution ultimately failed to sustain itself because Keynes's disciples confined their interest to macro-economic problems without constructing a micro-economic theory upon which their analysis could rest. Without a consistent micro-economic theory, it was only a matter of time until Keynesian analysis would be intellectually done in. And it was.

The result is that, since Keynes, economic policy (based largely on Keynesian macro-economics) and economic theory (based on the price auction equilibrium model) have coexisted in a state of mutual suspicion and tolerance. In academia the tension was covered up by dividing economics into two separate, largely unrelated, micro and macro segments.

ECONOMIC TURMOIL in the 1970s and '80s has led once again to dissatisfaction with economics. This dissatisfaction has focused on Keynesian economics and on its inability to cope with rising inflation and unemployment. This has led to what Thurow calls a return to economic fundamentalism, pre-Keynesian economics, with policy once again being based on a literal interpretation of the price-auction equilibrium theory.

If one takes the theory literally, as monetarists and supply-siders do, there is one main conclusion: if the economy is performing poorly, then something must be interfering with the well-oiled mechanism of the market economy. To remedy that, government must be taken out of the economy.

Economists may adhere to the same underlying theory, but that does not mean there are no significant policy differences among them. Take, for example, the experience of the Reagan administration. In his economic entourage, Reagan brought together various specimens of free-market believers. This mixture resulted in two contradictory policies: an expansion of the economy to be encouraged by tax cuts, and a contraction of the economy to be brought on by monetary policy.

In attempting to combat inflation Reagan employed monetary policy, cutting back on the money supply. Thurow points out that the first result of such constraint is not on prices, but on output and employment. Only when there is substantial idle plant capacity and large-scale unemployment is the upward thrust of wages and prices averted. Monetary policy will control inflation, but at the cost of inducing a recession.

At the same time, Reagan attempted to expand the economy, using free-market principles provided by the supply-siders. The supply-siders made the appealingly simple argument that if taxes for individuals and corporations are reduced, production will expand and public revenues eventually increase. Taxes in their view are a major constraint on economic effort and investment, so the result of the supply-side theory has been a large and regressive cut in personal and corporate taxes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That the promises of the supply-siders were wildly exaggerated is now widely accepted. But Thurow argues that no matter what one thinks of the supply-siders, they can claim to have grounded their policy on accepted economic theory. Thurow agrees with supply-sider Norman Ture that supply-side economics is simply "the application of price theory in analyzing problems concerning economic aggregates." The fact that most economists did not endorse supply-side economics is further evidence of the muddled relationship between economic theory and economic policy.

THE CONTRADICTIONS between economic reality and the price-auction model have led some professional economists to perform sophisticated intellectual gymnastics to "save" the theory. Thurow dissects one of these attempts by a group called Rational Expectationists. The Rational Expectationists base their theory on the price-auction model, but they drop the idea of perfect knowledge and add the idea that the economy is subject to large random shocks. The result of misinformation and random shocks is that the economy can be knocked off its normal path for substantial periods of time—hence unemployment and the business cycle. Government intervention in the economy cannot improve economic performance because the improving action by government will be anticipated by economic actors (thus the name, Rational Expectations), and the intended effects will be negated by the anticipated action.

The Rational Expectation theory, as Thurow notes,

> leads us to be extremely pessimistic about our ability to do anything. . . . Government intervention might be desired because society would like to alleviate economic pain but intervention is not useful since it cannot cure the pain even if implemented. In other words there are real economic problems, but there are no economic solutions. . . . Resign yourself to the fact that the best possible performance may be a rather poor performance.

This is an economics in sync with the times. There is nothing wrong with the economy or economic theory that a dose of diminished expectations won't cure.

The weakness of Thurow's critique is that he offers no alternative theory. Thurow can justly say that the purpose of his book was not to present an alternative but rather to criticize the present orthodox theory. But the consequence of not presenting an alternative theory is that Thurow's terms of opposition sustain what he argues against. At one point Thurow seems to acknowledge this:

> Since economic reality is always much more complex than any theory, it is always possible to shift to an alternative theory to account for any one puzzling fact. In general, no one fact can beat the equilibrium price auction model. In economics, only a more persuasive theory can beat the present theory.

There are reports that Thurow's next book will attempt to provide an alternative theory. As for the future of economics: we should remember that in the 1930s the price auction view of the economy was destroyed and nothing replaced it. It has been destroyed again by Thurow. Yet it lives on. □

Lester Rodney

Civil Rights on the Diamond

BASEBALL'S GREAT EXPERIMENT, by Jules Tygiel. New York: Oxford University Press. 392 pp. $16.95.

It might be illuminating for someone in the stands at a big-league baseball game to ask youthful white fans, randomly, "Did you know that until 1947 black players were not allowed on big-league teams?" I suspect at least half would respond with something like, "You gotta be kidding." And I wouldn't bet against at least one reply along the lines of "Oh, was that, like, when there was slavery?" Only in America, where history is fleeting and elusive . . .

Back in my first incarnation, as a sportswriter, one day in 1937 I asked Burleigh Grimes, manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, how he would feel about a chance to put a Dodger uniform on Satchel Paige or Josh Gibson, two black players of obvious big-league star caliber. "Lester," said Grimes unhappily, "let's talk about something else. You're wasting your time. It'll never happen. Just think of the trains, hotels, restaurants, the spring-training and exhibition games down south. How could it be?"

It was exactly as inconceivable to Burleigh Grimes that such players as Jackie Robinson, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Bob Gibson, and their black brothers of more ordinary big-league skills would ever play in the leagues as it is to many of today's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fans that there was a time when such players were barred because their skin wasn't the right color.

THE WAY THE GREAT CHANGE took place, and its major impact on American life (Martin Luther King told black Dodger pitcher Don Newcombe, "You'll never know what you and Jackie and Roy did to make it possible to do my job") have never been seriously examined before the publication of *Baseball's Great Experiment*. More than 36 years now have passed since a very black man with number 42 on his uniform stepped out of the Ebbets Field dugout to quite literally change the complexion of "America's National Pastime," and one can attribute the delay to the traditional condescension of historians toward sports, which they tend to see as kid stuff off to one side of real life.

It remained for Jules Tygiel, born two years after Jackie Robinson's Dodger debut, to grow up a historian (at San Francisco State University) and a baseball lover, and to devote five years to the research needed for so mammoth a task. Wide-ranging interviews and examination of personal papers supplement contemporary accounts, some found in obscure publications.

Tygiel has done a remarkable job. What gives the book its special value is that he does not stop with the glow of victory. He painstakingly follows the desegregation story team by team (as late as 1953 only 6 of the 16 big-league teams had black players), and he traces the evolution of southern minor-league cities torn between economics and bigotry. What we get from this detail is a sense of the catalytic importance of baseball's pioneering to the historic Supreme Court decision of 1954.

The years of the 1930s, when the lonely campaign began, unfortunately receive telescoped, though accurate, treatment. In fairness to the author, it would take another volume to bring equivalent scholarship to this seminal period.

The uncomfortable fact for previous chroniclers is that the Communist party and its organ, the *Daily Worker*, played a significant role in the campaign that finally turned Branch Rickey into an Abe Lincoln. (Rickey hated with a passion to have it appear that pressure had anything to do with the case, which is why he flew into a cold rage when writers from the Negro weekly *Amsterdam News* and from the *Daily Worker* showed up at the Dodgers' wartime Bear Mountain spring-training camp with three black players seeking a tryout.)

TYGIEL'S BOOK IS THE FIRST about Robinson and baseball desegregation to objectively cite the role of the *Daily Worker* alongside the valiant black weekly sportswriters who began it all—notably Wendell Smith of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Sam Lacy of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, and Joe Bostic of New York's *Amsterdam News*.

Says Tygiel: "Although narrow access to the public limited both sets of advocates . . . they succeeded to a remarkable degree in informing the American people of the existence and injustice of Jim Crow athletics." He briefly details some of the ways in which the *Daily Worker* ". . . attacked the baseball establishment," part of what he terms the necessary effort in the face of the conspiracy of silence that nourished baseball segregation.

It is interesting in this connection to recall that Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal, in his monumental *An American Dilemma*, viewed white northern unawareness and apathy as a major roadblock to progress toward equality. "It is convenient for the Northerner's good conscience to forget about the Negro," Myrdal wrote. "One of the main difficulties is simply lack of publicity . . . [which is] of the highest strategic importance." Being a Swede, he didn't know it, but no way can you get more socko "publicity" in this country than through the sports scene, which, for better or worse, commands the avid and unflagging attention of most Americans.

Is it credible that 35 years into the 20th century an absolute ban against blacks in our "national pastime" evoked no indignant blasts in our great newspapers, brought forth no articles listing the qualified and overqualified black stars available, no incredulous queries directed to the commissioner, the league heads, the white team owners, managers, and players? You better believe it.

Aside from the Negro weeklies, it was the *Daily Worker* that picked up the cudgels. In the '30s, the paper forced National League prexy Ford Frick to state there was no written ban, and then put each owner on the spot. It was Pittsburgh owner Bill Benswanger's troubled but favorable reply that led to the agreement to a tryout for Roy Campanella, on which Benswanger subsequently reneged under pressure from the other owners. The *Worker* followed the lead of the *Courier*, the nation's leading Negro weekly, in interviewing the white managers and players of local and visiting teams, with startling results that shot down the allegation that "white players would never stand for it." The *Worker* and *Courier* pooled their results.

In September 1937, a *Daily Worker* interview with the nation's leading "invisible man," the nonpareil pitcher Satchel Paige, impinged on "the Northerner's good conscience." Paige, portrayed at his death two years ago as a benign and nonmilitant

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

man, challenged the World Series winners to a winner-take-all game against his black All-Stars. He offered to pay his own way to any big-league spring training camp for a tryout, and said he would forget the whole thing if he didn't make the grade. He challenged baseball to poll all fans entering big-league ballparks as to whether they wanted black players on the teams. None of the challenges were accepted. Then 31 years old, Paige would wait 11 more cruel years to take his place on a big-league pitching mound.

The campaign, which included successful petition drives at ballparks launched by young Communists, grew in the war years into a broad committee that included the muscle of the "establishment." So it was that the New York *Daily News*, with the largest circulation in the land, on July 21, 1942, reported

> . . . a casual remark dropped three years ago by Leo Durocher [then manager of the Dodgers] which he "can't remember" may carve a larger niche in baseball history than all his shortstopping and managerial heroics. He told Lester Rodney, *Daily Worker* sports editor, now in the Army, that he'd use colored players with the Dodgers but for the general ban by club owners. . . . The comment became the tail of a tornado that is threatening to democratize the national pastime of our Democracy. Assailed by more than a million letters, telegrams and phone calls, Commissioner Landis . . .

Among the usually historically overlooked events traced by Tygiel is the fatal impact of baseball integration upon a major black business, the Negro leagues. The conflicted black owners were taken advantage of by the white big-league owners, who knew the blacks couldn't appear before their own people as blockers of baseball integration. Puny or no compensation for signing Negro League players was the result. Tygiel is wise enough to recognize that the segregated Negro leagues did create a lively and rich life in their time, and to conclude, "But the ability of people to survive and sustain a flourishing culture in the face of discrimination does not erase the stain . . . the racism of American society."

ROBINSON EMERGES in this book as the many-dimensioned person he was. Insightful recollections by Jackie's widow, Rachel, fill in the homely details of life during the tumultuous year with Montreal (then the Dodgers' top minor-league affiliate) in 1946. We see Robinson evolve from the artificially restrained Dodger rookie of '47 to become Most Valuable Player (and probably "Most Voluble," as his true aggressive self happily emerged), to a coffee executive, a brief supporter of Richard Nixon (!), and finally to the deeper critic of our society's waning commitment to full equality, refusing a Yankee invitation to a 1969 oldtimers' game because "my pride in my blackness . . . requires that until I see genuine interest in breaking the barriers that deny access to managerial and front-office positions, I will say no. . . . "

Rickey, "an American original," is also portrayed in his full complexity. I must confess that I could never fully figure him out (something I would never admit as a *Daily Worker* writer). I have no reason to doubt the basic sincerity of his deep religious impulse against discrimination. Yet he was an unscrupulous businessman and had to be called to account by Landis, and he was something of a demagogue and was often patronizing toward blacks. When the growing clamor brought matters to a head, Rickey seized the moment. Far smarter than the other magnates, he cashed in on the first black players and received credit for the inevitable. No saint he, for sure. Yet he is the one who took the giant step when the others wouldn't, and, once committed, he fought hard and effectively against those who would sabotage it. Rest with good marks, Branch Rickey.

Tygiel deals well with the double standard applied to black players coming in, offers an accurate surmise on the St. Louis Cardinal "strike" against Robinson, chops away some of the benign aura around Yankee Manager Casey Stengel, and goes into the human drama of the conflicted Dodger radio announcer of the time, Mississippi-born Red Barber. Regardless of what kind of fan you are, or aren't, you will find the book fascinating.

One point of personal privilege I think necessary for historicity. The book quotes the *Courier*'s Wendell Smith saying, some time after the breakthrough, that "the Communists did more to delay the entrance of Negroes into big-league baseball than any other single factor." It should be noted that by this time Smith was also working for Rickey, whose line that was. Back on August 20, 1939, when the good fight was being fought, the *Daily Worker* published a letter to me from Smith then congratulating the *Worker* on its role in the campaign and its "past great efforts," and suggesting further joint campaign projects. The *Courier*, hardly a radical paper, would undoubtedly have preferred to congratulate the *New York Times* or the *Post*, but that's the way it was.

Baseball's Great Experiment is a superb and sorely needed book, one that strikes a balance between according baseball desegregation its historic significance, and not being conned by it into an "everything is peachy now" outlook. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

More on Orwell

Editors:

Gordon Beadle, in "Orwell and the Neoconservatives" (*Dissent*, Winter 1984), has disposed of the neoconservative attempt to "steal" the Orwell who wrote throughout his life as an unorthodox leftist and fought in Spain on the side of the revolutionary anti-Stalinist party, the POUM. Reading, a little while back, through the excellent biography of Orwell by Bernard Crick, I came across the following paragraph:

> That January of 1946 Orwell wrote a full-page review for *The Manchester Evening News* of a group of books on socialism. He asked whether the old ideas of "human brotherhood" involving hopes to abolish "war, crime, disease, poverty and overwork" were being abandoned for "a new kind of caste society in which we surrender our individual rights in return for economic security?"—which he saw as the Soviet way. Socialists, he said, "are not obliged to believe that human society can actually be made perfect, [only] that it could be made a great deal better than it is" and that "most of the evil that men do results from the warping effects of injustice and inequality." The basis of socialism was humanism, it could co-exist with Christianity, but not with the belief that man is inherently a fallen creature. He pictured among those who believe in "the possibility of human progress a three-cornered struggle between Machiavellianism, bureaucracy, and Utopianism." He came down on the side of the utopians.

SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN □

Jobs & Work Time

Editors:

Bob Kuttner's article, "Jobs," in the Winter 1984 *Dissent*, is well done. His argument, however, might have been stronger, had his focus on jobs not been blurred by proposals to reduce work time. I'm all in favor of reducing work time. But there isn't much political or economic clout in merely being in favor of it.

First of all, there is enormous resistance to reducing work time. Since 1947, gross domestic product per capita—a measure of productivity—has risen about 2 percent per year, while average weekly hours have declined by a mere 0.4 percent a year (this includes the increase in voluntary part-time work). In other words, the preference for more goods and services has been far more powerful than any preference for more leisure. Such preferences are deeply embodied in living habits, consumer debt, aspirations for higher living standards. Attempts to reverse them meet with much difficulty.

The decline of physical labor has made the eight-hour day tolerable. When work time ran to ten hours a day or more, its reduction became a moral cause, a necessity for allowing the spirit to develop and family life to thrive. Reducing the eight-hour day merely is a proposition in economic policy. It excites no fervor. All the less so when you consider that it would entail a cut in income. Yes, such a cut could be minimized or avoided if the reduction were phased in over a period of time. But employers would still seek to save the extra cost arising from paying the same wage for less work by installing equipment that would help avoid hiring additional workers. On a theoretical plane, at least, I'd argue that reduced work time doesn't necessarily create more jobs, and may cut them—as it has in France and Belgium in recent years.

Kuttner's initial focus on jobs is right. He's also right in arguing that the gains from productivity must be redistributed—only they should be redistributed to create more jobs, especially in the human services. I doubt that it is feasible to redistribute them from gains in real income to increased leisure.

H. BRAND □

El Salvador

Editors:

Facile logic is not what one expects from Irving Howe. What then is to be made of his response to Stephen Soiffer's challenge to Howe's position on Central America? On the one hand, Howe condemns the Salvadoran revolutionaries for their alleged "authoritarianism" and resort to "terrorist" methods; on the other, without explicitly acknowledging that it is the right which has been responsible for the vast majority of political murders, Howe rejects the "inference" that he equates rightist death squads with revolutionary guerrillas.

Howe will have to do better than that if he is to safeguard his (otherwise) well-earned reputation for candor and straight thinking. He might begin by considering the high level of discipline and political commitment required to sustain revolutionary momentum when opposing reactionary political gangsters who are being financed, supplied, and trained by the U.S.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Appreciating these difficulties is, of course, no excuse for condoning leftist brutalities if and when these occur, but it does help to place both the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan situations in perspective.

Since Howe himself apparently has yet to come to such an appreciation, and instead has seen fit to condemn both sides, one may legitimately ask what and whose purposes are thereby being served.

If the American left is to preserve its international credibility, as well as its self-respect, it must forthrightly identify with those seeking an end to imperialist domination and oligarchical exploitation. It must, in short, accommodate its liberal inhibitions and obsessive anti-Stalinism to the admittedly distasteful realities of Third World class struggle. Only then will American socialists have earned the moral right to pontificate about those doing the actual fighting and dying for socialism.

David H. Katz
East Lansing, Michigan

Irving Howe Replies:

If David Katz will extend his researches as far back as the Summer 1983 *Dissent*, he will find there, under my by-line, a strong condemnation of the "government in El Salvador that tolerates (or fails to suppress) the terrorism of its own army." If he wants a statement that the right has been responsible for most of the political murders, I hereby make it.

But is that really what's bothering him? I think it's, rather, that writers in *Dissent* have been critical of the authoritarian politics and methods of important segments of the guerrilla forces. The stupefying resort to "Marxist-Leninist" ideology and rhetoric, the use of terrorist methods against factional opponents, and the strange interrelations between "left" and "right" elites in El Salvador were exhaustively documented by Gabriel Zaid in the Winter 1982 *Dissent*. No one has mounted a substantial challenge to Zaid's facts; I suspect that no one can.

What we get, instead, are elitist and patronizing comments by apologists for left authoritarianism about the "admittedly distasteful realities of Third World class struggle." Where have we heard *that* sort of talk before? And do those "distasteful realities" extend to the murderous methods that segments of the opposition have used against one another?

Some guerrillas in El Salvador may think they are "fighting and dying for socialism." Indeed, the tragedy of our century is that so many people (in the First, the Second, and the Third World) have thought they were "fighting and dying for socialism" when in fact they were in the service of a party dictatorship. If after a guerrilla victory the dominant political tone were set by the Social Democrat Ungo, who heads its political branch abroad, there might be some hope. But it's far more likely that the guerrilla leaders in El Salvador would, if victorious, move toward a dictatorship Cuban-style.

To speak of "socialism" in a country as economically impoverished and politically repressed as El Salvador is a fantasy. What one might hope for—at most—is more modest: a measure of democracy, social reforms, especially with regard to land ownership, and control of the army by a civilian government so as to end its oppressive and terrorist activities. Even that, in view of the Reagan administration's reactionary politics, has come to seem unlikely. There are genuine democrats in El Salvador, but they are being mercilessly squeezed by fanatics and extremists on both sides. The cynical romanticism displayed in Mr. Katz's letter doesn't help at all. □

Who Voted for Hitler?

Editors:

George Eckstein's review of my book *Who Voted for Hitler?* (in your Summer 1983 issue) is filled with sloppy and careless errors.

The most serious of these is his misrepresentation of my basic thesis. In answer to the question of where the National Socialist (NSDAP) vote came from, Eckstein claims I set out "to prove that its bulk was cast by the upper and upper-middle classes." That is definitely *not* the case.

A table showing class and party choice can, of course, be percentaged in several ways, depending on the question at issue. One would ask: What percentage of a given class supported Hitler's party? That is the causal question, the question inherent in 50 years of comment on the subject. Or one could ask: What percentage of support for Hitler's party came from a given class? This is a separate and distinct question, one best described as the compositional question. My concern was with the former, the causal question, with that of the extent of support for the National Socialists found in the various classes of Germany.

The basic finding, for most of the cities investigated, was that support for Hitler's party increased with the social standing of the district. Hitler's strongest support generally came in the "best" areas of Germany's cities.

That does not say "the bulk" of the NSDAP vote came from the upper and upper-middle classes. I took some pains to make this point clear, even inserting a diagram to illustrate these very different implications.

(Continued on page 255)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cumulative Index 1982–1983

Volume 29: 1–128, Winter 1982; 129–256, Spring 1982; 257–384, Summer 1982; 385–504, Fall 1982.
Volume 30: 1–128, Winter 1983; 129–272, Spring 1983; 273–400, Summer 1983; 401–528, Fall 1983.

INDEX BY AUTHOR

Adamson, Walter L.—*Italian Communists and the Gramscian Traditions* ... 29 : 230
Alderson, Jeremy Weir—*Sunbelt Psychosis* 29 : 486
Alperovitz, Gar—*Coping with Recession* (symposium) ... 30 : 156
Améry, Jean—*Anti-Semitism on the Left* 29 : 41
Arrow, Kenneth J.—*Coping with Recession* (symp.) ... 30 : 157
Avishai, Bernard—*The Lost Cause of "Napoleon"* (MOVIES) ... 29 : 215
Benard, Cheryl—*Afghanistan's Resistance: An Unsentimental Look* ... 30 : 244
Bensman, David—*Concession Bargaining in Steel** (WORK & WORKERS IN THE 1980s) 30 : 97
Minding Its Own Business: A Local Trade Union in Action (WORK & WORKERS) ... 29 : 330
Berman, Marshall—*"Feminism, Community, Freedom"* (COMMUNICATIONS—hereafter COM.) ... 30 : 247
Berryman, Phillip—*Another View of El Salvador* (COM.) ... 29 : 352
Bershtel, Sara (and Graubard, Allen)—*The Jewish Revival: A New Saving Remnant?* 29 : 314
Booth, Paul—*Labor Prepares for the Elections* ... 29 : 270
Brand, H.—*A Growing Burden on the Workers* ... 30 : 137
Solidarity's Economic Program (POLAND) ... 29 : 162
Bratkowski, Stefan—*From Poland, a Voice of Truth* (POLAND) ... 29 : 154
Bromwich, David—*Nuclear War Gossip* ... 29 : 7
Burnham, Walter Dean—*The Ascendancy of the Right** ... 30 : 434
Carpenter, Luther—*Can Britain's Welfare State Be Saved?* ... 29 : 80
Reagan's Reactionary Budget ... 30 : 135
Time for Some Answers ... 29 : 133
Chomsky, Noam—*"The Denial of the Dead"** (COM.) ... 29 : 218
Clark, Joseph—*Chicago Changes the Agenda* ... 30 : 281
"Looking into El Salvador"—and Cuba: A Reply (COM.) ... 29 : 223
What Could the West Have Done? (POLAND) ... 29 : 166
Clark, Paul F.—*Democratic Reform in the Miners' Union* ... 30 : 143
Cohen, Jean L.—*The New Class: Does It Exist? 2. Skeptical Thoughts** ... 30 : 499
Cohen, Patricia (and Shull, Leon)—*Coping with Recession* (symp.) ... 30 : 162
Conley, J. J.—*Research Cutbacks & Corporate Squeeze* ... 30 : 383
Corradi, Juan E.—*Argentina: A Story Behind a War* ... 29 : 285
Reagan's Disasters in Central America 30 : 151
Cort, John C.—*The Bishops and the Bomb** ... 30 : 170
The Bishops Stay the Course ... 30 : 285
The Catholic Church and Socialism ... 29 : 195
Coser, Lewis—*At First Glance* ... 30 : 275
Dwight Macdonald ... 30 : 132
*Mitterrand's First Two Years** ... 30 : 165
*Reagan and the Welfare State** ... 29 : 9
Coser, Rose Laub—*The ERA Did Not Die in Vain* ... 29 : 398
Denitch, Bogdan—*Rebellion of Europe* ... 29 : 5
Stability & Change in Eastern Europe 30 : 375
Toward a Sane Defense Policy ... 29 : 273
Echols, Beate—*The Chimera of Enterprise Zoning* ... 29 : 268
Eckstein, George—*Europe Between the Superpowers* ... 29 : 262
Edsall, Thomas B.—*A Letter from Washington: Congress After the 1982 Election* 29 : 400
Ehrenreich, Barbara—*On Feminism, Family & Community* (COM.) ... 30 : 103
Elon, Amos—*Shame on the West Bank* ... 30 : 152
Elshtain, Jean Bethke—*Feminism, Family and Community* ... 29 : 442
A Reply (to Barbara Ehrenreich)* (COM.) 30 : 106
A Reply (to Marshall Berman)* (COM.) 30 : 250
Engelstein, Stanley—*Supreme Court Sets Back Union Democracy* ... 29 : 394
Farer, Tom J.—*"How Critical Is Our Condition?"* (COM.) ... 29 : 103
Faricellia, Jamie (with Hearn, Frank, and Mertens, Michael)—*An American Tragedy: Act Two* (WORK & WORKERS) ... 30 : 183
Feiveson, H. A.—*Thinking About Nuclear Weapons* ... 29 : 183
Fetscher, Iring—*Some Problems of Democracy** ... 30 : 199
Frankel, Jonathan—*Israel: The War and After* ... 30 : 7
Fraser, Douglas—*Coping with Recession* ... 30 : 158
From a MacNeil-Lehrer Interview ... 30 : 292
Gacek, Stanley A.—*Repression in Brazil* 29 : 141
Geltman, Emanuel—*El Salvador: Talk** ... 29 : 139
J. Edgar: They Led You Astray ... 30 : 148
The Mighty and the Obscene ... 29 : 11
Who Killed Carlo Tresca? ... 30 : 237

* For full titles of asterisked items, see Index by Title.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Geremek, Bronislaw—*Pride of Place Goes to Truth** (POLAND) ... 29 : 157
Glyde, G. P.—*On "Goodput" and "Badput"* ... 30 : 21
Goldman, Merle—*The Chinese Intellectuals* ... 29 : 360
Gordon, Max—*"Looking into El Salvador"—and Cuba* (COM.) ... 29 : 221
Gotbaum, Victor—*Coping with Recession* (symp.) ... 30 : 159
Graubard, Allen (and Bershtel, Sara)—*The Jewish Revival: A New Saving Remnant?* 29 : 314
Greenberg, Jack—*The Blacks, Reaganism, and 1984* ... 30 : 414
Greenberg, Mark—*A Breakdown of Consensus: Mounting Problems in the Welfare State* ... 29 : 468
Harrington, Michael—*A Path for America: Proposals from the Democratic Left* ... 29 : 405
"A Path for America" (reply to comments) ... 30 : 30
Hart, Stephen—*Ethical Relativism, Left-Wing Politics* ... 29 : 483
Haskell, Gordon—*Roger Baldwin 1884–1981* ... 29 : 102
Hausknecht, Murray—*Crime and the Culture of Incivility* ... 30 : 75
David Stockman—"How the World Works" ... 29 : 136
Waiting for the End?—Prospects for Nuclear Destruction ... 29 : 282
Hearn, Frank (with Mertens, Michael, and Faricellia, Jamie)—*An American Tragedy: Act Two* (WORK & WORKERS) ... 30 : 183
Heilbroner, Robert—*Coping with Recession* (symp.) ... 30 : 160
A Feasible Vision of Socialism ... 30 : 473
Hendin, Josephine—*The "New Yorker" as Cultural Ideal* ... 29 : 450
Henry, Washington—*"Reds" Through Rosy Glasses* (MOVIES) ... 29 : 213
Himmelstrand, Ulf—*Sweden: Toward Economic Democracy** ... 30 : 329
Hoffmann, Stanley—*American Liberals and Europe's Antinuclear Movement* ... 29 : 148
Howe, Irving—*At First Glance* ... 30 : 131
Central America Cry Halt! ... 30 : 279
From Roosevelt to Reagan ... 30 : 45
Keeping the Record Straight ... 29 : 382
Poland: I: In Praise of "Solidarity" ... 29 : 152
Solidarity ... back cover Winter 1982
A Talk with Victor Reuther ... 30 : 141
This Space Reserved ... 29 : 391
Too Important for the Experts ... 29 : 261
Hux, Samuel—*Are 300 Parties Too Many Parties?* ... 29 : 362
Isaacs, Harold R.—*Re-encounters in China** ... 30 : 322
Isserman, Maurice—*The Erlich-Alter Case and the Solidarity Movement* ... 29 : 227
Jacobsen, John Kurt—*Stalemate in Northern Ireland* ... 29 : 320
Jacoby, Russell—*Graying of the Intellectuals** ... 30 : 234
Jones, D. A. N.—*"Labour Isn't Working": The Present State of the British Labour Movement* ... 30 : 426
Kapuscinski, Ryszard—*The Emperor* ... 30 : 49
Kasinitz, Philip—*Neo-Marxist Views of the State* ... 30 : 337
Kesselman, Mark—*Socialists in France: An Early Balance* ... 30 : 17
Kilson, Martin—*The Black Bourgeoisie Revisited** ... 30 : 85
Kirkland, Lane—*A Few Words** ... 30 : 144
Kolakowski, Leszek—*Did Solidarity "Go Too Far"?* (POLAND) ... 29 : 167
Komisar, Lucy—*A Talk With Spain's Socialist Leader* ... 29 : 364
Konrád, George—*Censorship & State-Owned Citizens* ... 30 : 448
Kott, Jan—*The Polish Diaspora* (POLAND) 29 : 298
Kusnet, David—*AFSCME Victory in California* ... 30 : 423
Laber, Jeri—*Human Rights in Yugoslavia* 29 : 138
Lekachman, Robert—*Coping with Recession* (symp.) ... 30 : 161
Socialism Reconsidered: A View from Yugoslavia ... 29 : 455
Levinson, Mark—*"How Critical Is Our Condition?"** (COM.) ... 29 : 105
Levitas, Tony—*Solidarity:In Paris* ... 30 : 241
Leys, Simon—*The Death of Lin Biao* ... 30 : 317
Liehm, A. J.—*Reform in Eastern Europe* 30 : 238
Lipset, Seymour Martin—*"How Critical Is Our Condition?"** (COM.) ... 29 : 107
Litani, Yehuda—*Tragedy on the West Bank* 30 : 456
Lourie, Richard—*The Last Jew in Poland* 29 : 487
The Fate of a Poem (POLAND) ... 29 : 294
Lowenthal, Richard—*The Future of "Social Democratic Consensus"* ... 29 : 93
Martin, Benjamin—*Spain, the U.S., & Latin America* ... 30 : 416
Marx (Eleanor, Jenny, Laura)—*The Daughters of Karl Marx: Excerpts of a Correspondence* ... 29 : 207
McLaughlin, Thomas—*Police Shows for the Reagan Era* ... 29 : 366
Medvedev, Roy—*Brezhnev: A Bureaucrat's Profile* ... 30 : 224
Meiss, Steve—*Airborn, Again* ... 29 : 367
Menand, Louis—*Liberalism Without the Imagination** ... 30 : 354
Mertens, Michael (with Hearn, Frank, and Faricellia, Jamie)—*An American Tragedy: Act Two* (WORK & WORKERS) ... 30 : 183
Metzgar, Jack—*Public Policy and Steel* ... 29 : 325
Michnik, Adam—*All of Us Are Hostages* (POLAND) ... 29 : 296
Mills, Nicolaus—*Football's First Strike* ... 30 : 22
Power Chic as Style and Politics ... 30 : 411
The Portable Generation ... 29 : 233
Milosz, Czeslaw—*You Who Wronged*, a poem (POLAND) ... 29 : 294
Mueller-Reissmann, Karl Friedrich—*The Weight of Megastructure** ... 29 : 336
Newman, David—*Work & Technology in Telephone* (WORK & WORKERS) ... 29 : 58
Nove, Alec—*A Feasible Vision of Socialism: . . . and a Word** ... 30 : 476
Ornstein, Allan C.—*Decline of the Frostbelt* ... 30 : 366
Osiel, Mark J.—*The Agonies of "Abertura": Brazil** ... 30 : 217
Pavadowska, Janina—*Conversation with Bronislaw Geremek** (POLAND) ... 29 : 157

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Paz, Octavio—*Latin America and Democracy* ..... 29 : 402
Pedraza-Bailey, Silvia—*Cuba: Reflections on a Revolution* ..... 30 : 509
Pinto, Diana—*Mitterrand Confronts the Intellectuals* ..... 29 : 463
Radosh, Ronald—*At First Glance* ..... 30 : 403
Reich, Robert B.—*Human Capital & Economic Policy* ..... 30 : 307
"A Path for America" (comment) ..... 30 : 25
Rosenberg, Bernard—*New Styles in Union Busting* ..... 29 : 392
The U.S.A. and the UAW: Notes from Dallas ..... 30 : 291
Rosenberg, Karen—*An Autumnal Love of Emma Goldman* ..... 30 : 380
Roy, Olivier—*Resistance in Afghanistan* ... 30 : 378
Rozen, Marvin E.—*Anyone for a Splendid Little War?* ..... 30 : 418
Rule, James B.—*The Future of Freedom: Politics & Technology* ..... 29 : 201
Sandoz, Gérard—*The Changing Face of France** ..... 29 : 143
Schirmer, Jennifer G.—*Legalized Repression in Chile* ..... 30 : 287
Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur—*"How Critical Is Our Condition?"** (COM.) ..... 29 : 110
Schwartz, Sanford—*I Walked with Intellectuals* ..... 30 : 360
Semprun, Jorge—*A Day in Buchenwald* .... 29 : 425
Sexton, Patricia Cayo—*The Life of the Homeless* ..... 30 : 79
Schull, Leon (and Cohen, Patricia)—*Coping with Recession* (symp.) ..... 30 : 162
Siegel, Fred—*Race: The Missing Issue of 1980* ..... 29 : 479
Sklar, Susan—*An Experiment in Worker Ownership* (WORK & WORKERS) ..... 29 : 61
Skocpol, Theda—*Legacies of New Deal Liberalism* ..... 30 : 33
Sleeper, Jim—*Black Politics in Brooklyn** 30 : 146
*Neighborhood Gentrification** ..... 29 : 169
Socha, Lukasz—*Poland: Must History Repeat Itself?* ..... 30 : 209
Souvarine, Boris—*Panaït Istrati: Portrait of a Rebel* ..... 29 : 342
Stark, Irwin—*Industrializing Our Universities** ..... 30 : 177
Steinfels, Peter—*The Bishops and the Bomb** ..... 30 : 175
Taylor, Barbara—*Eve and the New Jerusalem* ..... 30 : 190
Terzuolo, Eric R.—*The Italian Communists & the Polish Crisis* ..... 29 : 265
Thurow, Lester C.—*"A Path for America"* (comment) ..... 30 : 26
Why Do Economists Disagree? ..... 29 : 176
Tyler, Gus—*Coping with Recession* (symp.) 30 : 163
"A Path for America" (comment) ..... 30 : 28
Sour Fruits of Reaganomics ..... 29 : 396
Waitzman, Norman—*A Sorcerer in Search of Sources: George Gilder** ..... 30 : 505
Walzer, Michael—*On Failed Totalitarianism* ..... 30 : 297
The Politics of Michel Foucault ..... 30 : 481
Socialism and the Gift Relationship ..... 29 : 431
Watts, Jerry G.—*The Case of a Black Conservative: Thomas Sowell** ..... 29 : 301
"It Just Ain't Righteous": On Witnessing Black Crooks and White Cops ..... 30 : 347
Weiser, Jay—*Caesar's Hour* ..... 30 : 385
Weisskopf, Thomas E.—*Reaganomics: Is It Finally Working?* ..... 30 : 407
West, Rebecca—*The Voice of Rebecca West* ..... 30 : 442
Widick, B. J.—*A Talk with Owen Bieber** 30 : 420
Williams, Philip M.—*The Rise, and Possibilities, of Britain's Social Democrats* 29 : 70
Wrong, Dennis—*"How Critical Is Our Condition?"* Reply* (COM.) ..... 29 : 112
*The New Class: Does It Exist?** ..... 30 : 491
Zaid, Gabriel—*Enemy Colleagues: A Reading of the Salvadoran Tragedy* ..... 29 : 13
A Reply (COM.) ..... 29 : 357
Zuboff, Shoshanah—*Problems of Symbolic Toil** (WORK & WORKERS) ..... 29 : 51

INDEX BY TITLE

Afghanistan's Resistance: An Unsentimental Look—Cheryl Benard ..... 30 : 244
AFSCME Victory in California—David Kusnet ..... 30 : 423
The Agonies of Abertura: Brazil Moves, a Little, Toward Democracy—Mark J. Osiel ..... 30 : 217
Airborn, Again—Steve Meiss ..... 29 : 367
American Liberals & Europe's Antinuclear Movement—Stanley Hoffman ..... 29 : 148
Anti-Semitism on the Left—Jean Améry 29 : 41
Anyone for a Splendid Little War?—Marvin E. Rozen ..... 30 : 418
Are 300 Parties Too Many Parties?—Samuel Hux ..... 29 : 362
Argentina: A Story Behind a War—Juan E. Corradi ..... 29 : 285
The Ascendancy of the Right: Why Are Reagan and Thatcher Strong in Times of Recession?—Walter Dean Burnham ..... 30 : 434
At First Glance—Lewis Coser ..... 30 : 275
—Irving Howe ..... 30 : 131
—Ronald Radosh ..... 30 : 403
An Autumnal Love of Emma Goldman—Karen Rosenberg ..... 30 : 380
The Bishops and the Bomb:
1. *The Bishops' Nuclear Heresy*—John C. Cort ..... 30 : 170
2. *How the Bishops Spoke With Care*—Peter Steinfels ..... 30 : 175
The Bishops Stay the Course—John C. Cort ..... 30 : 285
The Black Bourgeoisie Revisited: From E. Franklin Frazier to the Present—Martin Kilson ..... 30 : 85
Black Politics in Brooklyn: Starker Choices, Higher Risks—Jim Sleeper ..... 30 : 146
The Blacks, Reaganism, and 1984—Jack Greenberg ..... 30 : 414
A Breakdown of Consensus: Mounting Problems in the Welfare State—Mark Greenberg ..... 29 : 468
Brezhnev: A Bureaucrat's Profile—Roy Medvedev ..... 30 : 224

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Caesar's Hour—Jay Weiser ..... 30 : 385
Can Britain's Welfare State Be Saved?—Luther Carpenter ..... 29 : 80
The Case of a Black Conservative, Thomas Sowell: Talent and Tragedy—Jerry G. Watts ..... 29 : 301
The Catholic Church and Socialism—John C. Cort ..... 29 : 195
Censorship & State-Owned Citizens—George Konrád ..... 30 : 448
Central America—Cry Halt!—Irving Howe ..... 30 : 279
The Changing Face of France: What Has the Mitterrand Government Done So Far?—Gérard Sandoz ..... 29 : 143
Chicago Changes the Agenda—Joseph Clark ..... 30 : 281
The Chimera of Enterprise Zoning—Beate Echols ..... 29 : 268
The Chinese Intellectuals—Merle Goldman ..... 29 : 360
COMMUNICATIONS:
"The Denial of the Dead": Response to Nadine Fresco (Fall 1981)—Noam Chomsky ..... 29 : 218
"Looking into El Salvador"—and Cuba—Max Gordon ..... 29 : 221
Joseph Clark Replies ..... 29 : 223
Another View of El Salvador—Phillip Berryman ..... 29 : 352
Gabriel Zaid Replies ..... 29 : 357
On "Feminism, Family & Community"—Barbara Ehrenreich Comments ..... 30 : 103
Jean Bethke Elshtain Replies ..... 30 : 106
"Feminism, Community, Freedom"—Marshall Berman Comments ..... 30 : 247
Jean Elshtain Replies ..... 30 : 250
"How Critical Is Our Condition?"—Four Comments on Dennis Wrong's article (Fall 1981), by Tom J. Farer, Mark Levinson, Seymour Martin Lipset, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.; with a Reply by Dennis Wrong ..... 29 : 103
Coping with Recession (symposium)—Comments by Gar Alperovitz, Kenneth J. Arrow, Douglas Fraser, Victor Gotbaum, Robert Heilbroner, Robert Lekachman, Leon Shull with Patricia Cohen, Gus Tyler ..... 30 : 156
Crime and the Culture of Incivility—Murray Hausknecht ..... 30 : 75
Cuba: Reflections on a Revolution—Silvia Pedraza-Bailey ..... 30 : 509
Cumulative Index 1980–1981 ..... 29 : 251
The Daughters of Karl Marx: Excerpts from a Correspondence ..... 29 : 207
David Stockman: "How the World Works"—Murray Hausknecht ..... 29 : 136
A Day in Buchenwald—Jorge Semprún ..... 29 : 425
The Death of Lin Biao—Simon Leys ..... 30 : 317
Decline of the Frostbelt—Allan C. Ornstein 30 : 366
Democratic Reform in the Miners' Union—Paul F. Clark ..... 30 : 143
Dwight Macdonald—Lewis Coser ..... 30 : 132
El Salvador: Talk or Big Talk?—Emanuel Geltman ..... 29 : 139
The Emperor—Ryszard Kapuscinski ..... 30 : 49
Enemy Colleagues: A Reading of the Salvadoran Tragedy—Gabriel Zaid ..... 29 : 13
The ERA Did Not Die in Vain—Rose Laub Coser ..... 29 : 398
The Erlich-Alter Case and the Solidarity Movement—Maurice Isserman ..... 29 : 227
Ethical Relativism, Left-Wing Politics—Stephen Hart ..... 29 : 483
Europe Between the Superpowers—George Eckstein ..... 29 : 262
Eve and the New Jerusalem—Barbara Taylor ..... 30 : 190
A Feasible Vision of Socialism
Robert Heilbroner ..... 30 : 473
. . . and a Word from Alec Nove ..... 30 : 476
Feminism, Family, and Community—Jean Bethke Elshtain ..... 29 : 442
A Few Words from Lane Kirkland ..... 30 : 144
Football's First Strike—Nicolaus Mills ..... 30 : 22
From a MacNeil-Lehrer Interview with Douglas Fraser ..... 30 : 292
From Roosevelt to Reagan—Irving Howe 30 : 45
From the Prisons of Poland: Two Activists Tell What Happened After Martial Law—from Gustaw Moszcz ..... 30 : 56
The Future of Freedom: Politics & Technology—James B. Rule ..... 29 : 201
The Future of "Social Democratic Consensus"—Richard Lowenthal ..... 29 : 93
Graying of the Intellectuals: Conservatives and Dissenters in the '50s and '80s—Russell Jacoby ..... 30 : 234
A Growing Burden on the Workers—H. Brand ..... 30 : 137
Human Capital & Economic Policy—Robert B. Reich ..... 30 : 307
Human Rights in Yugoslavia—Jeri Laber 29 : 138
Industrializing Our Universities: Big Business Tests Academic Autonomy—Irwin Stark ..... 30 : 177
Israel: The War and After—Jonathan Frankel ..... 30 : 7
Italian Communists and the Gramscian Traditions—Walter L. Adamson ..... 29 : 230
The Italian Communists & the Polish Crisis—Eric R. Terzuolo ..... 29 : 265
"It Just Ain't Righteous": On Witnessing Black Crooks and White Cops—Jerry G. Watts ..... 30 : 347
I Walked with Intellectuals—Sanford Schwartz ..... 30 : 360
J. Edgar: They Led You Astray—Emanuel Geltman ..... 30 : 148
The Jewish Revival: A New Saving Remnant?—Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard ..... 29 : 314
Keeping the Record Straight—Irving Howe 29 : 382
Labor Prepares for the Elections—Paul Booth ..... 29 : 270
"Labour Isn't Working": The Present State of the British Labour Movement—D. A. N. Jones ..... 30 : 426
The Last Jew in Poland—Richard Lourie 29 : 487
Latin America and Democracy—Octavio Paz ..... 29 : 402
Legacies of New Deal Liberalism—Theda Skocpol ..... 30 : 33

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Legalized Repression in Chile—Jennifer G. Schirmer ... 30 : 287
A Letter from Washington: Congress After the 1982 Election—Thomas B. Edsall ... 29 : 400
Letters from Lebanon—by an Israeli Tank Officer ... 30 : 16
Liberalism Without the Imagination: Some Remarks on Politics and Culture—Louis Menand ... 30 : 354
The Life of the Homeless—Patricia Cayo Sexton ... 30 : 79
The Mighty and the Obscene—Emanuel Geltman ... 29 : 11
Mitterrand Confronts the Intellectuals—Diana Pinto ... 29 : 463
Mitterrand's First Two Years: An Advanced Welfare State in One Country?—Lewis Coser ... 30 : 165
MOVIES:
"Reds" Through Rosy Glasses—Washington Henry ... 29 : 213
The Lost Cause of "Napoleon"—Bernard Avishai ... 29 : 215
Neighborhood Gentrification: More Inequity than Meets the Eye—Jim Sleeper 29 : 169
Neo-Marxist Views of the State—Philip Kasinitz ... 30 : 337
The New Class: Does It Exist?
1. *Skeptical Thoughts About a Fashionable Theory*—Dennis Wrong ... 30 : 491
2. *Skeptical Thoughts from Another Direction*—Jean L. Cohen ... 30 : 499
New Styles in Union Busting—Bernard Rosenberg ... 29 : 392
The "New Yorker" as Cultural Ideal—Josephine Hendin ... 29 : 450
Nuclear War Gossip—David Bromwich ... 29 : 7
On Failed Totalitarianism—Michael Walzer ... 30 : 297
On "Goodput" and "Badput"—G. P. Glyde 30 : 21
Panaït Istrati: Portrait of a Rebel—Boris Souvarine ... 29 : 342
A Path for America: Proposals from the Democratic Left—Michael Harrington 29 : 405
"A Path for America"—Three Comments, by Robert B. Reich, Lester C. Thurow, Gus Tyler; Michael Harrington Replies 30 : 25
POLAND (Spring 1982):
1. *In Praise of "Solidarity"*—Irving Howe ... 29 : 152
2. *From Poland, a Voice of Truth*—Stefan Bratkowski ... 29 : 154
3. *Pride of Place Goes to Truth: A Conversation with Bronislaw Geremek* (with Janine Paradowska) ... 29 : 157
4. *Solidarity's Economic Program*—H. Brand ... 29 : 162
5. *What Could the West Have Done?*—Joseph Clark ... 29 : 166
6. *Did Solidarity "Go Too Far"?*—Leszek Kolakowski ... 29 : 167
POLAND (Summer 1982):
1. *You Who Wronged*—Czeslaw Milosz 29 : 294
2. *The Fate of a Poem*—Richard Lourie 29 : 294
3. *All Are Hostages*—Adam Michnik ... 29 : 296
4. *The Polish Diaspora*—Jan Kott ... 29 : 298
Poland: Must History Repeat Itself?—Lukasz Socha ... 30 : 209
Police Shows for the Reagan Era—Thomas McLaughlin ... 29 : 366
The Politics of Michel Foucault—Michael Walzer ... 30 : 481
The Portable Generation—Nicolaus Mills 29 : 233
Power Chic as Style and Politics—Nicolaus Mills ... 30 : 411
Public Policy and Steel—Jack Metzgar ... 29 : 325
Race: The Missing Issue of 1980—Fred Siegel ... 29 : 479
Reagan and the Welfare State: Thoughts Out of Season—Lewis Coser ... 29 : 9
Reagan's Disasters in Central America—Juan E. Corradi ... 30 : 151
Reagan's Reactionary Budget—Luther Carpenter ... 30 : 135
Reaganomics: Is It Finally Working?—Thomas E. Weisskopf ... 30 : 407
The Rebellion of Europe—Bogdan Denitch 29 : 5
Re-encounters in China: Notes of a Journey in a Time Capsule—Harold R. Isaacs ... 30 : 322
Reform in Eastern Europe—A. J. Liehm 30 : 238
Repression in Brazil—Stanley A. Gacek ... 29 : 141
Research Cutbacks & Corporate Squeeze—J. J. Conley ... 30 : 383
The Resistance in Afghanistan—Olivier Roy ... 30 : 378
The Rise, and Possibilities, of Britain's Social Democrats—Philip M. Williams 29 : 70
Roger Baldwin 1884–1981—Gordon Haskell ... 29 : 102
Shame on the West Bank—Amos Elon ... 30 : 152
Socialism and the Gift Relationship—Michael Walzer ... 29 : 431
Socialism Reconsidered: A View from Yugoslavia—Robert Lekachman ... 29 : 455
Socialists in France: An Early Balance—Mark Kesselman ... 30 : 17
Solidarity—Irving Howe (back cover, Winter, 1982) ... 30 :
Solidarity: At Work in Paris—Tony Levitas 30 : 241
Some Problems of Democracy: Can It Remain Vital in Advancing Countries?—Iring Fetscher ... 30 : 199
A Sorcerer in Search of Sources: The Wizardry of George Gilder—Norman Waitzman ... 30 : 505
Sour Fruits of Reaganomics—Gus Tyler ... 29 : 396
Spain, the U.S., and Latin America—Benjamin Martin ... 30 : 416
Stability & Change in Eastern Europe—Bogdan Denitch ... 30 : 375
Stalemate in Northern Ireland—John Kurt Jacobsen ... 29 : 320
Sunbelt Psychosis—Jeremy Weir Alderson 29 : 486
Supreme Court Sets Back Union Democracy—Stanley Engelstein ... 29 : 394
Sweden—Toward Economic Democracy: A Social Democratic Government Contemplates New Policies—Ulf Himmelstrand 30 : 329
A Talk with Owen Bieber of the UAW—B. J. Widick ... 30 : 420
A Talk with Spain's Socialist Leader—Lucy Komisar ... 29 : 364
A Talk with Victor Reuther—Irving Howe 30 : 141
Thinking About Nuclear Weapons—H. A. Feiveson ... 29 : 183
This Space Reserved—Irving Howe ... 29 : 391

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Time for Some Answers—Luther Carpenter ..... 29 : 133
Too Important for the Experts—Irving Howe ..... 29 : 261
Toward a Sane Defense Policy—Bogdan Denitch ..... 29 : 273
Tragedy on the West Bank—Yehuda Litani 30 : 456
The U.S.A. and the UAW: Notes from Dallas—Bernard Rosenberg ..... 30 : 291
The Voice of Rebecca West—Rebecca West 30 : 442
Waiting for the End?—Prospects for Nuclear Destruction—Murray Hausknecht 29 : 282
The Weight of Megastructure: Does It Destroy Our Social Adaptability?—Karl Friedrich Mueller-Reissmann ..... 29 : 336
Who Killed Carlo Tresca?—Emanuel Geltman ..... 30 : 237
WORK & WORKERS IN THE 1980s:
An American Tragedy: Act Two—Frank Hearn, Michael Mertens, Jamie Faricellia ..... 30 : 183
Concession Bargaining in Steel: A Weakened Union Faces Corporate Blackmail—David Bensman ..... 30 : 97
An Experiment in Worker Ownership—Susan Sklar ..... 29 : 61
Minding Its Own Business: A Local Trade Union in Action—David Bensman ..... 29 : 330
Problems of Symbolic Toil—How People Fare with Computer-Mediated Work—Shoshanah Zuboff ..... 29 : 51
Work & Technology in Telephone—David Newman ..... 29 : 58
Why Do Economists Disagree?—Lester C. Thurow ..... 29 : 176

BOOKS REVIEWED

Aleksandra Kollontai: Socialism, Feminism, and the Bolshevik Revolution, by Beatrice Farnsworth (Rose Laub Coser) 29 : 235
Beyond the Cold War, by E. P. Thompson (Murray Hausknecht) ..... 30 : 263
Bolshevik Feminist: The Life of Aleksandra Kollontai, by Barbara Evans Clements (Rose Laub Coser) ..... 29 : 235
The Child Savers: Juvenile Justice Observed, by Peter S. Prescott (Robert Leiter) ..... 29 : 373
The Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism, by Brian Smith (Mark J. Osiel) ..... 30 : 114
Code Name "Mary": Memoirs of an American Woman in the Austrian Underground, by Muriel Gardiner (Emanuel Geltman) ..... 30 : 518
Communism, Anticommunism, and the CIO, by Harvey A. Levenstein (Henry C. Fleisher) ..... 29 : 500
The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy of Peace and Political Warfare, by Blanche Wiesen Cook (Fred Siegel) 29 : 115
The Deindustrialization of America, by Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison (Carol O'Cleireacain) ..... 30 : 520
The Destruction of Reason, by Georg Lukács (Mitchell Cohen) ..... 30 : 523
Eisenhower and the Cold War, by Robert Divine (Fred Siegel) ..... 29 : 115
The Eisenhower Diaries, edited by Robert Ferrell (Fred Siegel) ..... 29 : 115
Eisenhower the President: Crucial Days, 1951–1960, by William Bragg Ewald, Jr. (Fred Siegel) ..... 29 : 115
Exterminism and Cold War, by E. P. Thompson et al. (Murray Hausknecht) 30 : 263
The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class, by Alvin W. Gouldner (Mark Oromaner) ..... 29 : 245
The Good Fight: Political Memoirs 1909–1958, by David Lewis (Lloyd Harrington) 29 : 377
Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World, by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (Mitchell Cohen) ..... 30 : 116
Hollywood Red: The Autobiography of Lester Cole (Ronald Radosh) ..... 29 : 498
Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment, by Stephen Ambrose (Fred Siegel) ..... 29 : 115
Indefensible Weapons: The Political and Psychological Case Against Nuclearism, by Robert Jay Lifton and Richard Falk (Murray Hausknecht) ..... 30 : 263
The Joke, by Milan Kundera (A. J. Liehm) 30 : 110
Journey to Nowhere: A New World Tragedy, by Shiva Naipaul (Lewis Coser) ..... 29 : 243
Legitimacy in the Modern State, by John H. Schaar (James P. Young) ..... 29 : 379
A Life in Two Centuries, by Bertram D. Wolfe (Douglas Stone) ..... 29 : 122
Lyndon B. Johnson: A Memoir, by George Reedy (Henry C. Fleisher) ..... 30 : 393
Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno, by Eugene Lunn (Mitchell Cohen) ..... 30 : 523
The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution, by J. L. Talmon (Mitchell Cohen) ..... 30 : 389
National Defense, by James Fallows (Saul Hillel Benjamin) ..... 29 : 241
The Nuclear Delusion, by George F. Kennan (Murray Hausknecht) ..... 30 : 263
The Once and Future Democrats, by Paul Simon (Mark Levinson) ..... 30 : 122
Our Fathers Who Are In Hell: The Life and Death of Jim Jones, by James Reston, Jr. (Lewis Coser) ..... 29 : 243
Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States, by Alice Kessler-Harris (Cynthia Fuchs Epstein) 30 : 267
The Politician: The Life and Times of Lyndon Johnson, by Ronnie Dugger (Henry C. Fleisher) ..... 30 : 393
Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley, by John Gaventa (Rand Smith) ..... 29 : 375
Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917, by Jonathan Frankel (Mitchell Cohen)... 29 : 495
The Questionnaire, or Prayer for a Town and a Friend, by Jiří Grusa (Zusana Kohákova) ..... 30 : 119

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Radical Persuasion (1890–1917): Aspects of the Intellectual History and the Historiography of Three American Radical Organizations, by Aileen S. Kraditor (Gus Tyler) ..... 30 : 513
Religion and Politics in Latin America: The Catholic Church in Venezuela and Colombia, by Daniel Levine (Mark J. Osiel) 30 : 114
The Road From Here, by Paul Tsongas (Mark Levinson) ..... 30 : 122
Roots of Radicalism: Jews, Christians, and the New Left, by Stanley Rothman and S. Robert Lichter (Robert Leiter) ..... 30 : 527
Russia's Failed Revolutions: From the Decembrists to the Dissidents, by Adam B. Ulam (Alexander Rabinowitch) ..... 29 : 119
Russia's Road to the Cold War, by Vojtech Mastny (Dennis Wrong) ..... 29 : 490

Salvador, by Joan Didion (Juan E. Corradi) 30 : 387
Stalin's American Policy: From Entente to Detente to Cold War, by William Taubman (Dennis Wrong) ..... 29 : 490
Steve Nelson, American Radical, by Steve Nelson, James R. Barret, and Rob Ruck (Ronald Radosh) ..... 29 : 498
Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy, by John Lewis Gaddis (Dennis Wrong) ..... 29 : 490
The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954–1980, by Harvard Sitkoff (John Henry Jones) ..... 29 : 501
The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism, by John D. Stephens (David Bensman) ..... 29 : 239
Weimar Etudes, by Henry Pachter (Peter Gay) ..... 30 : 261
The West Bank Story, by Rafik Halabi (Dan Rothstein) ..... 29 : 370
Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party During the Second World War, by Maurice Isserman (Joseph Clark) ..... 30 : 256
Who Voted for Hitler? by Richard F. Hamilton (George Eckstein) ..... 30 : 396
Winning Back America, by Mark Green (Mark Levinson) ..... 30 : 122
With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War, by Robert Scheer (Murray Hausknecht) ..... 30 : 263
Workers in Industrial America, by David Brody (B. J. Widick) ..... 29 : 123
The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Path to Power, by Robert Caro (Henry C. Fleisher) ..... 30 : 393

LETTERS

(continued from page 248)

In my hypothetical figures (p. 46), those two classes formed only 15 percent of the *nonfarm* population. Even if they had voted 100 percent for the NSDAP, they would still not have formed "the bulk of" the Nazi vote at a time when that party took 37.3 percent of the total.

When I did address the question Eckstein has posed, my conclusion was very different from the one he alleges. In Berlin, for example, I report that "almost half of [the city's] NSDAP vote came from the nine working-class districts of the city." Given that some NSDAP votes came out of the "mixed" districts (those with both workers and lower-middle-class populations), it is difficult to see how he came to the conclusion that "upper-middle-class predominance in the Nazi vote" is my thesis.

Richard F. HAMILTON
Montreal, Canada

GEORGE ECKSTEIN Replies:

If my review of the Hamilton book came to misunderstand Hamilton's basic thesis, I am not alone. Even the jacket blurb reads: "Challenging the traditional belief that Hitler's supporters were largely from the lower middle class, this book examines data from . . . fourteen of the largest German cities and demonstrates that in most of them the vote for the Nazi [party] varied with the class level of the district, with the wealthiest districts giving it the strongest support." The very title of the book makes a reader expect that it will deal with the distribution of the total vote for Hitler among the various segments of the population.

The book's paragraph (p. 45) that deals with the "causal" and "compositional" question is rather obscure; compared to it that paragraph in his letter is a peak of clarity.

Hamilton's elaborate dissection of the voting pattern in some of the largest German cities, full of assumptions and speculations as it is bound to be, may well be correct in its conclusion that the upper and upper-middle classes as a group, compared to the other classes, did deliver a higher percentage of Nazi voters. In actual numbers that vote was, of course, only a fraction of the lower-middle-class Nazi vote. This reduces Hamilton's great discovery to an interesting footnote.

The Nazi party needed, was oriented to gain, and received an overwhelming number of votes. These came mainly from small towns and rural areas, and from the urban lower-middle class. To the upper classes Hitler looked for other contributions: financial and newspaper support, and government contacts—a fact Hamilton deals with in excellent detail. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Jack Nusan Porter is one of those rare writers who is as at home with scholarly treatises as he is with the popular media . . . His books represent more than just a collection of his outstanding writings; it secures his position as one of the important witnesses of his generation . . ."

—THOMAS J. COTTLE, Harvard Medical School and TV host of "The Tom Cottle Show"

The Jew as Outsider: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives: Collected Essays. 232 pp. $10 (paper); $20.50 (cloth).

"Highly stimulating . . . lucid . . . deserves to be read."

—PROF. WILLIAM B. HELMREICH, in **Judaica Book News**

Genocide and Human Rights: A Global Anthology. 353 pp. $13.50 (paper); $24.25 (cloth).

"The outstanding anthology on genocide and related human rights violations . . . indispensable . . ."

—PROF. RICHARD ARENS, University of Bridgeport, School of Law

Jewish Partisans: A Documentary of Jewish Resistance in the Soviet Union. Vol. 1: 310 pp. Vol. 2: 312 pp. each volume $12.75 (paper); $25.25 (cloth)

". . . extremely valuable . . . a signal contribution . . . Dr. Porter has helped substantially to close one more gap in Holocaust studies and to dramatize the suffering and resistance of Soviet Jewry . . ."

—PROF. NORA LEVIN, Gratz College, author of **The Holocaust** and **While Messiah Tarried**

Confronting History and Holocaust: Collected Essays: 1972-1982. 170 pp. $9.75 (paper); $20.75 (cloth).

"His name is virtually legendary in what has been called the Jewish Student/Countercultural/Radical Movement."

—RABBI BENJAMIN KAHN, Director, Jewish Studies Program, American University

Order from your bookstore or from: University Press of America
4720 Boston Way
Lanham, MD. 20706
(301) 459-3366

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Robert Coles on INTELLECTUALS

For many years, as I have worked, trying to understand how all sorts of families make do, often against considerable odds, I have written articles and books for interested fellow citizens. Soon enough, I have received the expected responses. But on one score I confess to perplexity, even alarm — an absence, almost total, of reaction when it comes to an entire side of my work. I refer to the descriptions I've rendered of the religious thoughts and feelings of the children and adults I've come to know.

All I need do, it seems, is come up with a social conclusion, make a psychological generalization, attempt a literary analysis, try portraying a certain kind of personal or regional life, and there are thoughtful (appreciatively or reprovingly so) correspondents willing to share their evaluations publicly. But when I have tried to describe how, say, an old Spanish-speaking woman from northern New Mexico, or a Southern black child, or an Appalachian white child, or a small-town working-class man happen to feel about Jesus and His words and deeds, then the result is either the silence already mentioned, or rarely, a puzzled, frustrated truculence: "I don't see why you get yourself into all that religious talk! If you're trying to prove that people are superstitious, or need a crutch, then a page is enough, not a chapter or half a book!"

In my own case, the attention given religious faith is held even more suspect because I'm a psychiatrist — and so, presumably, "educated" and "perceptive" enough (so I was told in another friendly letter!) to "know better"! I should be what an intellectual ought to be — someone who analyzes how others think and feel, who gives reasons for one or another moment of history. The civil rights struggle, for instance: I ought have kept my mind on the various "variables" that prompted it.

Meanwhile, there is this young man from Birmingham, Alabama, speaking in 1965: "I don't know why I said no to segregation. I'm just another white Southerner, and I wasn't brought up to love integration! But I was brought up to love Jesus Christ, and when I saw the police of this city use dogs on people, I asked myself what Jesus would have done — and that's all I know about how I came to be here, on the firing line!"

Intellectuals also need to document how people's beliefs prompt them to live their lives. And I fear that when I started doing that I learned something about myself and my kind — how arrogant and self-centered we risk becoming: interested in our own heady assertions, and anxious to be the spokespersons for all those others, who don't write and teach and come up with new ideas, but who rather, try to go from one day to the next, and who yes, in large numbers indeed, keep calling on Jesus, not the intellectuals, for guidance. —from the June 1982 **NEW OXFORD REVIEW**.

If you are interested in exploring the beliefs behind the "data" — in probing the deeper religious feelings embedded in our lives, however much we try to ignore them — if you want to *understand* what moves a Martin Luther King Jr., a Lech Walesa, an Archbishop Romero, a Mother Teresa, a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Polish Pope, a Simone Weil, a Dorothy Day, a George Orwell, then you're ready to look into the **NEW OXFORD REVIEW**. We are spearheading the renewed interest among today's intellectuals in what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." Robert Coles writes a regular column called "Harvard Diary," and like him, our writers — Juli Loesch, John C. Cort, J.M. Cameron, Arthur F. McGovern, Dale Vree, and others — express themselves with clarity, verve, style, and "heart." Published monthly, we have been praised by *Newsweek* for being "thoughtful," and the *Library Journal* predicts we will "doubtless command increasing attention."

(Please allow 2 to 8 weeks for delivery of first issue) (An ecumenical Christian monthly edited by lay Roman Catholics)

SPECIAL DISCOUNT RATES FOR FIRST-TIME SUBSCRIBERS

- ☐ One-year subscription . . . $9 (regularly $14)
- ☐ One-year student or retired person's sub . . . $7 (regularly $12)
- ☐ Three-year subscription . . . $19 (regularly $36)
- ☐ One-year Canadian or foreign subscription . . . $11 (regularly $17) Payment must be drawn in U.S. Funds
- ☐ Sample copy . . . $3.50

NAME (Please print or type)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

Make check payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW and mail to:

NEW OXFORD REVIEW
Room 415
1069 Kains Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94706

PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dissent

A Meese Vision from Charles Dickens

. . . a stray personage of a meek demeanour, who had wandered to the hearthrug and got among the heads of tribes assembled there in conference with Mr. Podsnap, eliminated Mr. Podsnap's flush and flourish by a highly unpolite remark; no less than a reference to the circumstance that some half-dozen people had lately died in the streets, of starvation. It was clearly ill-timed after dinner. It was not adapted to the cheek of the young person. It was not in good taste.

"I don't believe it," said Mr. Podsnap, putting it behind him.

The meek man was afraid we must take it as proved, because there were the Inquests and the Registrar's returns.

"Then it was their own fault," said Mr. Podsnap.

Veneering and other elders of tribes commended this way out of it. At once a short cut and a broad road.

The man of meek demeanour intimated that truly it would seem from the facts, as if starvation had been forced upon the culprits in question—as if, in their wretched manner, they had made their weak protests against it—as if they would have taken the liberty of staving it off if they could—as if they would rather not have been starved upon the whole, if perfectly agreeable to all parties.

"There is not," said Mr. Podsnap, flushing angrily, "there is not a country in the world, sir, where so noble a provision is made for the poor as in this country."

The meek man was quite willing to concede that, but perhaps it rendered the matter even worse, as showing that there must be something appallingly wrong somewhere.

"Where?" said Mr. Podsnap.

The meek man hinted, Wouldn't it be well to try, very seriously, to find out where?

"Ah!" said Mr. Podsnap. "Easy to say somewhere; not so easy to say where! But I see what you are driving at. I knew it from the first. *Centralization.* No. Never with my consent. Not English."

An approving murmur arose from the heads of tribes; as saying, "There you have him! Hold him!"

He was not aware (the meek man submitted of himself) that he was driving at any ization. He had no favourite ization that he knew of. But he certainly was more staggered by these terrible occurrences than he was by names, of howsoever so many syllables. Might he ask, was dying of destitution and neglect necessarily English?

— From *Our Mutual Friend*

dissent
521 Fifth Avenue New York, N.Y. 10017

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED